

**FROM *SHANHAI JING* TO *LIAOZHAI ZHIYI*:  
TOWARDS A MORPHOLOGY OF CLASSICAL  
CHINESE SUPERNATURAL FICTION**

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## **Declaration**

All work, unless otherwise acknowledged, is my own. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature:

Date

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## Abstract

The present research is an attempt at a morphological analysis of classical Chinese supernatural fiction known as *zhiguai* under the theoretical framework designed by Vladimir Propp and later developed by Alan Dundes. As to the study of Chinese *zhiguai* tales, mountains of work has been done, but research is usually confined either to exploration into the geographical-historical sources of these tales or to the recognition and reconstruction of society in ancient China. It is therefore believed that a systematic study of *zhiguai* literature from a linguistics-oriented structural-functional perspective will shed light on the rules governing the textual organisation of classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange.

This thesis will be divided into two parts with the first one aiming at a diachronic survey of *zhiguai* literature. In this section, the origins of this genre and its development through dynasties in traditional China will be explored with attention focused on an evidential and thematic study of *zhiguai* works most influential and representative of the time and of the author as well.

Part Two, which will start with a review of Propp's morphological method and model, is devoted to a synchronic study of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction from a Proppian perspective. For each tale text selected for morphological analysis, functions will be identified, and a linear functional scheme presented, and described in terms of the sequence of functions and the distribution of functions among *dramatis personae*. All the structural and functional traits will be tabulated, discussed and, where possible and necessary, compared. Finally, based on a data analysis, a conclusion will be made on morphological features and structural patterns of classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange.

Fifty *zhiguai* tales will be selected for analysis from ancient *zhushu* (commentaries), *leishu* (categorised books), *congshu* (collectanea), or authoritative modern editions of works of supernatural fiction in classical Chinese. In the course of selection, priority has been given to those about other/supernatural beings or mortals with supernatural power as classified by Aarne as "Tales of magic" in conformity with Propp's corpus of Russian fairy tales in *Morphology of the Folktale*.

## Abbreviations

BTSC	<i>Beitang Shuchao</i> 北堂書鈔 (Books and Documents from the Northern Hall)
BZQS	<i>Baizi Quanshu</i> 百子全書 (Complete Works of One Hundred Writers)
CBSB	<i>Sibu Congkan Chubiansuoben</i> 四部叢刊初編縮本 (Collectanea in Four Divisions: the First Bridged Version).
CCJCCB	<i>Congshu Jicheng Chubian</i> 叢書集成初編 (The First Collection of Collectanea).
CSJCJB	<i>Congshu Jicheng Jianbian</i> 叢書集成簡編 (A Condensed Collection of Collectanea).
CXJ	<i>Chu Xue Ji</i> 初學記 (Classics Essential to Beginners)
CWZM	<i>Congwen Zongmu</i> 崇文總目 (A General Catalogue of the Chongwen Library)
FSTY	<i>Fengsu Tongyi</i> 風俗通義 (A General Survey of Social Customs)
FYZL	<i>Fayuan Zhulin</i> 法苑珠林 (A Grove of Pearls in the Dharma Garden)
GJCS	<i>Guoxue Jiben Congshu Sibaizhong</i> 國學基本叢書四百種 (Collectanea of Four Hundred Categories of Works Essential to Chinese Studies)
GXSGC	<i>Guxiaoshuo Gouchen</i> 古小說鉤沈 (Ancient Fiction Gleaned from Ancient Books).
JZDSZ	<i>Junzhai Dushu Zhi</i> 郡齋讀書誌 (An Annotated Catalogue of the Books at Juanzhai Study)
JYLSM	<i>Jiangyunlou Shumu</i> 絳雲樓書目 (The Catalogue Book of the Crimson Cloudy Tower)
QQTSM	<i>Qianqingtang Shumu</i> 千頃堂書目 (The Catalogue Book of Qianqing Chamber)
SCTSM	<i>Suichutang Shumu</i> 遂初堂書目 (The Catalogue Book of Suichu Chamber)
SKQS	<i>Siku Quanshu</i> 四庫全書 (The Complete Library of the Four Treasuries)
SLJT	<i>Zhizhai Shulu Jieti</i> 直齋書錄解題 (A Book Catalogue with Annotations by Zhizhai)
SSJJZ	<i>Sui Shu Jingji Zhi</i> 隋書經籍志 (The Bibliographical Section of History of the Sui Dynasty)
SSYWZ	<i>Song Shi Yiwen Zhi</i> 宋史藝文志 (The Catalogue of History of the Song Dynasty)
SWJZ	<i>Shuowen Jiezi</i> 說文解字 (Explaining Words and Analysing Characters)

TPGJ	<i>Taiping Guangji</i> 太平廣記 (The Extensive Records of the Taiping Period)
TPYL	<i>Taiping Yulan</i> 太平御覽 (The Imperial Encyclopaedia of the Taiping Period)
TSJJZ	<i>Jiu Tang Shu Jingji Zhi</i> 舊唐書藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of <i>Old History of the Tang Dynasty</i> )
TSYWZ	<i>Xin Tang Shu Yiwen Zhi</i> 新唐書藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of <i>New History of the Tang Dynasty</i> )
WYYH	<i>Wenyuan Yinghua</i> 文苑英華 (Finest Flowers in the Garden of Literature)
XXSKQS	<i>Xuxiu Siku Quanshu</i> 續修四庫全書 (A Sequel to <i>the Complete Library of the Four Treasures</i> )
YJQQ	<i>Yunji Qiqian</i> 雲笈七籤 (Seven Lots from the Bookcase of the Clouds)
YWLJ	<i>Yiwen Leiju</i> 藝文類聚 (A Categorised Collection of Literary Writings)
ZMTY	<i>Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiya</i> 四庫全書總目提要 (An Annotated Catalogue of the Complete Library of the Four Treasures)
ZTDZ	<i>Zhengtong Daozang</i> 正統道藏 (The Daoist Canon Compiled under the Zhengtong Emperor of the Ming)

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# From *Shanhai Jing* to *Liaozhai Zhiyi*: Towards a Morphology of Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction

## Introduction

My thesis is an attempt at a morphological analysis of the classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange, using the theoretical framework designed by Vladimir Propp (1928), with a view to presenting a synchronic picture of its structural features.

The genre known in the West as "supernatural fiction" is best represented by the classical Chinese term *zhiguai* 志怪, which literally means "records of the strange", and has long been a focus of Chinese studies among literary historians, folklorists, and mythologists. Early studies of *zhiguai* concentrate on the recompilation and reconstruction of *zhiguai* texts preserved in fragments in various *leishu* 類書 (encyclopaedia),<sup>1</sup> *congshu* 叢書 (collectanea),<sup>2</sup> and *zhushu* 注疏 (commentaries).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Leishu* is a kind of reference book in which quotations, usually anecdotes and allusions, are collected, in accordance with an editorial principle, from primary materials and commentaries to ancient classics, and arranged under a topic, according to theme and content, into different subdivisions, such as *Yiwen Leiju* 藝文類聚 (A Categorized Collection of Literary Writings, hereafter YWLJ), *Chu Xue Ji* 初學記 (Classical Texts for Beginners, hereafter CXJ), *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記 (The Extensive Records of the Taiping Period, hereafter TPGJ), *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Encyclopaedia of the Taiping Period, hereafter TPYL), *Fayuan Zhulin* 法苑珠林 (A Grove of Pearls in the Dharma Garden, hereafter FYZL), *Yu Hai* 玉海 (The Sea of Jade), etc. The history of compiling *Leishu* can be traced back to the Six Dynasties in China.

<sup>2</sup> *Congshu* refers to a publication series in which complete works by different authors on widely varied subjects are bundled together under the one generic term of "collectanea". The oldest *congshu* named *Baichuan Xuehai* 百川學海 (A Sea of Scholarship, Nourished from Hundred Streams) was published in 1273 under the Yuan dynasty. Among the most important collectanea are *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 (the Complete Library of the Four Treasures, hereafter SKQS), *Sibu Beiyao* 四部備要 (Essentials of the Four Sections), *Sibu Congkan* 四部叢刊 (Collectanea of the Four Sections), *Congshu Jicheng* 叢書集成 (Complete Collection of Collectanea), and *Guxue Jiben Congshu Sibaizhong* 國學基本叢書四百種 (Collectanea of Four Hundred Categories of Works Essential to Chinese Studies, hereafter GJCS).

<sup>3</sup> The *zhu* or *zhushu* writing began with the three great commentaries on Confucius' *Chun Qiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals)—the *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳 (Zuo's Commentary to the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*), *Gongyang Zhuan* 公羊傳 (Gongyang's Commentary to the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*), and *Guliang Zhuan* 穀梁傳 (Guliang's Commentary to the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*). They are basically exegetic notes, occasionally interspersed with narratives inspired by or derived from primary texts. Some commentaries are so well-written and thought-provoking that they have acquired an even higher reputation, and have long been studied independently from the primary materials. For more about the relationship between commentaries and *xiaoshuo* writings, see DeWoskin (1974: iii-iv) and Wong (2000: 400-409).

The most representative of the achievements in this field is *Gu Xiaoshuo Gouchen* 古小說鉤沈 (Classical Chinese Fiction Gleaned from Ancient Books, hereafter GXSGC) by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1938). In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in *zhiguai* works, but studies of them are generally confined to the framework established by Lu Xun (1925) in his *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shilüe* 中國小說史略 (A Brief History of Chinese Fiction), with emphasis put on a social-anthropological mode of interpretation in the hope of restructuring social and religious life in ancient China.

An examination of the critical literature pertaining to *zhiguai* fiction reveals that while *zhiguai* is acknowledged to be the earliest and most prolific form of classical Chinese fiction, a systematic analysis of the form and structure of *zhiguai* as an independent genre has not been attempted to date. I therefore believe that adopting a linguistics-oriented structural-functional approach to *zhiguai* fiction can be justified on the grounds that a morphological analysis of *zhiguai* tales may yield a clearer interpretation of the textual patterns of classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange.

While the focus of this thesis is to be fixed on a synchronic presentation of morphological features of *zhiguai* fiction, a historical review of classical Chinese supernatural fiction will be conducted before a morphological analysis is made of this genre. The aim of this diachronic research is two-fold: to complement the synchronic analysis in order to present a panoramic view of classical Chinese supernatural fiction, and to justify the selection of tale texts and the arrangement of their order for morphological analysis in this thesis.

With this in mind, I shall divide this thesis into two parts, with the first part devoted to a historical survey of *zhiguai* literature. Chapter One of this thesis will start with a generic study of the Chinese term *xiaoshuo* 小說 in relation to the *zhiguai xiaoshuo* 志怪小說 (fiction of the supernatural and strange), and in this chapter I shall also explore the origins of *xiaoshuo*, trace the history of this word used as a cataloguing term in Chinese traditional bibliology, and examine the earliest forms of *zhiguai* writings, produced before the Wei 魏 dynasty (220-265).

This section is then further divided into four chapters corresponding to the four distinct stages in Chinese literary history of *zhiguai* development, namely, the Six

Dynasties 六朝 (220-618), the Tang 唐 (618-907) and the Five Dynasties 五代 (907-960), the Song 宋 (960-1279), Jin 金 (1115-1234), and Yuan 元 (1206-1368) dynasties, and the Ming 明 (1368-1644) and Qing 清 dynasties (1616-1911). Each of the four chapters will begin with an introduction to major works of supernatural fiction of the time, followed by an evidential and thematic investigation of them.

Part Two will concentrate on a morphological analysis of *zhiguai* tale texts, mainly through the application of Propp's method and model. To make up for inadequacies of the Proppian model, I will adapt and apply a Proppian-style model developed by Alan Dundes (1964) for his study of American folktales to the classification of the *zhiguai* genre. This section will thus begin with an introduction of Propp's morphological theory in terms of tale functions, tale roles, and the sequence of functions. In the course of morphological analysis of tale texts, the particular form and sequence of functions will be determined, a functional scheme presented, and a list of *dramatis personae* provided in accordance with functions in which characters in a tale text are involved. Next, all morphological traits and varieties found within the Chinese *zhiguai* corpus will be tabulated, discussed, and compared, where possible and necessary, with those identified by Propp in Russian fairy tales. Finally, on the basis of a data analysis of the tabulated information, I will conclude with a summary of the morphological features and structural patterns of classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange.

As is evident from the title of this thesis, the present research will cover the whole span of *zhiguai* history from *Shanhai Jing* 山海經 (The Book of Mountains and Seas, hereafter SHJ) to *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊齋志異 (Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio, hereafter LZZY). Over more than two thousand years, traditional China produced hundreds and thousands of *zhiguai* works, providing extremely rich resources for research on the one hand, and on the other hand, presenting a huge task to make a proper selection. Although a systematic investigation of functional schemes and structural patterns of *zhiguai* fiction inevitably involves examination of a large number of magic tales from pre-modern China, it would be impracticable to analyse every single version of every single *zhiguai* tale, nor would it be necessary in a morphological study. "In order to avoid overselectivity in choosing an illustrative corpus" of *zhiguai* tale texts, I shall follow Alan Dundes (1964: 11-12) and give

priority, first and foremost, to tales which were most popular and representative of the time, and of the author as well. In the course of selection, the scope is to be further narrowed down to tales about gods, ghosts, fairies, spirits, monsters, animals, and supermen with magical power, which, like Russian fairy tales investigated by Propp (1968: 19) in *Morphology*, fall into the category of "Tales of Magic" and are numbered by Aarne (1911) between 300 and 749 on the folktale type index, while notes, jokes, fables, anecdotes which are included in *zhiguai* works but hardly have a story to tell will be excluded from the data of our corpus.

Accordingly, fifty *zhiguai* tale texts have been selected for morphological analysis. They, as shown in Appendix I, are arranged by the order of their appearance in history, and are divided into four groups: 6 from the Pre-Wei period, 19 from the Six Dynasties, 14 from the Tang and the Five Dynasties, 11 from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. The number of the *zhiguai* tales in each of the four groups is roughly in proportion to their production and distribution in the corresponding historical periods of their appearance as compared to other genres of fictional writings. They are arranged in this manner to investigate possible patterns or laws governing the evolution of their construction.

Since Propp's morphological framework is built primarily upon the fairy tale in folklore, there is no point asserting that Chinese *zhiguai* tales are different from Russian fairy tales because of certain distinctive morphological features peculiar to *zhiguai* fiction. The purpose of this morphological study, as mentioned above, is to find what distinguishes classical Chinese supernatural fiction in terms of form and structure as a unique genre of "strange writings".

## Part One: *Zhiguai*: Definition and Development

### Chapter One: *Xiaoshuo* and *Zhiguai Xiaoshuo*: a Generic Survey

#### Section 1: *Xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term

- The term *xiaoshuo* in early Chinese classics

In Chinese literary history, *zhiguai xiaoshuo* as a genre must be studied in relation to *xiaoshuo*. The word *xiaoshuo* is a general term for *zhiguai*, *zhiren* 志人 (tales about men)<sup>1</sup> and *chuanqi* 傳奇 (stories of the marvellous)<sup>2</sup> in the tradition of *wenyan xiaoshuo* 文言小說 (fiction in classical Chinese).<sup>3</sup>

The first known use of the term *xiaoshuo* was made in the “Waiwu” 外物 (External Objects) section of “Zapian” 雜篇 (Random Chapters) of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (The Writings of Zhuangzi)<sup>4</sup> to refer to a fable about Ren Gongzi 任公子 (Prince of the Ren State) fishing with a huge line baited with fifty bulls. Standing at the top of Mt. Huiji 會稽, Ren Gongzi casts the fishing line into the East Sea 東海, and waits patiently year in and year out for fish to take the bait, but to no avail, until towards the end of one year when he catches a huge fish. After great efforts, he pulls the fish ashore, cuts it up, and salts it for thousands of people to eat.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rather than being used in Chinese traditional bibliography to indicate a genre of writings complementary to *zhiguai* as suggested by DeWoskin (1986: 280), the term “*zhiren*”, in fact, came about much later. The earliest recorded systematic use of this word as a generic term to refer to tales about men and the world was made by Lu Xun in 1924 in a series of lectures he gave under the title “*Zhongguo Xiaoshuo de Lishi Bianqian*” 中國小說的歷史變遷 (On the Historical Development of Chinese Fiction) in Northwestern University in Xi'an 西安. For these lectures, see Lu Xun (1981: 300-340).

<sup>2</sup> The term *chuanqi*, which literally means stories transmitting the marvelous, was first used by the Tang writer Pei Xing 裴鉞 (825-880) as a title for a collection of his short stories, and later was employed to denote the Song-Jin *zhugongdiao* 諸宮調 (in all keys and modes), the Yuan *zaju* 雜劇 (comedy), and the Ming *nanxi* 南戲 (southern drama). It was not until late Ming when Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) categorized *chuanqi* as one of the six subtypes of *xiaoshuo* that the word was first firmly established as a generic term for a form of Tang fiction, which is characterized by flamboyant tone, elaborate narrative, rich descriptions, ornate style, and sensuous language. For more discussions of *chuanqi*, see Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> In the history of Chinese traditional fiction, the term *wenyan xiaoshuo* is used as opposed to *baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小說 (fiction in the vernacular), which arose around the Song dynasty (960-1279).

<sup>4</sup> The *Zhuangzi* is generally attributed to Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (fl. 330BC). The version of this work I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted under the title of *Zhuangzi Jijie* 莊子集解 (A Collectively Annotated Edition of the *Zhuangzi*) and included in Vol. 054 of GJCS.

<sup>5</sup> For this fable about Ren Gongzi in the *Zhuangzi*, see Vol. 054 of GJCS, p. 62



This story was not included in the *Zhuangzi* for entertainment, but as a satirical metaphor to scathe those who went canvassing from one state to another, "to fish for fame and reputation by polishing and peddling *xiaoshuo* (petty talk 小說),"<sup>6</sup> as shown in a brief comment immediately after the story:

The canvassers of later generations were all struck with awe and recounted the tale to each other. If one, holding high a fishing rod and line, goes fishing in a ditch or a pool, he may catch small fry, but it would be difficult for him to catch big fish. It follows that if one polishes petty talk (*xiaoshuo* 小說) to fish for fame and reputation, he will be far from obtaining the Great Wisdom (*dada* 大達). Therefore, those who have never heard of the way Prince of the Ren State fished will still have a long way to go in pursuit of long-lasting fame.<sup>7</sup>

Although Zhuang Zhou did touch upon an important aspect of *xiaoshuo*, that is, its function for the gaining of "fame and reputation", he stopped short of explaining the term further, which makes it difficult for us to make an accurate inference of his concept of *xiaoshuo*. However, from the context where it occurs in opposition to *dada*, the word *xiaoshuo* was most probably used in the *Zhuangzi* to refer to arts or writings of lower value and taste, in contrast to profound and elegant works of poetry or philosophy. Thus it is far from being a generic term to designate the type of writings which would later develop into what is known today as 'fiction'.

This conception of *xiaoshuo* used in the *Zhuangzi* in contrast to *dada* bears striking resemblance to the Confucian idea of *xiaodao* 小道 (small talk; by-way). In the "Zizhang" 子張 chapter of the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects),<sup>8</sup> this message is made clear through Zixia 子夏, one of Confucius' disciples, when he says:

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<sup>6</sup> As the two Chinese characters "小說" literally denote, the term *xiaoshuo* here might be better translated as "petty talk" than "fiction". Lu Xun (1981: 5) simply interprets it as "chit-chat of no great importance" (*suoxu zhi yan* 瑣屑之言). For a more detailed semantic analysis of this term, see the next section of this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. 054 of GJCS, p. 62. In translation, I consult *Chuang Tsu: Taoist Philosopher and Chinese Mystic* translated by Herbert A. Giles (1961: 261), and some minor changes are made to it.

<sup>8</sup> The version of the *Analects* I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted under the title of *Lunyu Zhengyi* 論語正義 (A Collated and Annotated Edition of the *Analects*) and included in Vol. 031 of GJCS.

Even *xiaodao* has something worth heeding. If you, however, have a long way ahead of you, it might lead you astray and get you lost in the mire. That is why gentlemen do not take to it.<sup>9</sup>

When we compare *xiaoshuo* with *xiaodao*, we find that the words *shuo* 說 and *dao* 道, both of which can denote "talk" and "theory" in classical Chinese,<sup>10</sup> are actually synonymous. A term related to *xiaoshuo* is also found in the "Zhengming" 正名 (Vindicating Names) chapter of the *Xunzi* 荀子 (Writings of Xunzi),<sup>11</sup> where Xunzi (325?-245?) degrades all the then current non-Confucian schools of thoughts as "strange talk of petty schools" (*xiaojia zhenshuo* 小家珍說) in contrast to the greatness and profundity of "theories of the sage" (*zhizhe lundao* 智者論道).<sup>12</sup>

A second recorded appearance of the word *xiaoshuo* is found in *Xin Lun* 新論 (A New Treatise) by Huan Tan 桓譚 (?BC-56AD),<sup>13</sup> where it is used in a more specific sense to designate a type of writings:

By putting together fragmentary and trivial talk (*can cong xiao yu* 殘叢小語), and drawing on parables and fables at hand, the *xiaoshuo* writers make up short pieces of writing, which contain messages worth reading on how to discipline oneself and manage one's family affairs.<sup>14</sup>

As compared with the use of *xiaoshuo* in the *Zhuangzi*, this definition, which covers at least three important aspects (style, content, and value) of a genre, is much more specific and informative. Stylistically, the *xiaoshuo* writings are short and fragmentary; in content and theme, they are parables and fables, and small talk on trivial topics; in function, they carry didactic value, being said to aid self-regulation and household management.

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<sup>9</sup> Vol. 031 of GJCS, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> See *Zhonghua Da Zidian* 中華大字典 (A Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters), pp.2295, 2338-2339. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1980.

<sup>11</sup> The version of the *Xunzi* referred to here is the one reprinted in Vol. 034 of GJCS.

<sup>12</sup> For his account of "xiaojia zhenshuo", see Vol. 034 of GJCS, p. 325.

<sup>13</sup> Huan Tan's *Xin Lun*, which is listed as containing 17 *juan* in *Juan 3* of *Sui Shu Jingji Zhi* 隋書經籍志 (The Bibliographical Section of *History of the Sui Dynasty*, hereafter SSJJZ), was lost sometime during the Tang dynasty. The version of SSJJZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 001 of *Congshu Jicheng Jianbian* 叢書集成簡編 (A Collection of Collectanea: a Condensed Edition, hereafter CSJCB).

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in *Juan 31* of *Wenxuan* 文選 (Selections of Refined Literature), where the Tang scholar Li Shan 李善 cited this line from *Xin Lun* to make annotations to a poem by Jiang Wentong 江文通. See Xiao Tong 蕭統 (1988: 439) for this quotation.



- The term *xiaoshuo* in Chinese traditional bibliology

The first use of the word *xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term occurred shortly afterwards in *Han Shu Yiwen Zhi* 漢書藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of History of the Han Dynasty, hereafter HSYWZ) by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92),<sup>15</sup> where *xiaoshuo* was placed last in a list of ten schools of philosophical writings.<sup>16</sup> Fifteen works were placed in the category of *xiaoshuo*.<sup>17</sup> Although Ban Gu made some comments on the fifteen books, these are too brief to be of any substantial help for us to draw any sound inference of their contents. Since none of the works listed survived even until the Tang period, we can only guess what kind of books they might be from his discussion of the origin of *xiaoshuo* in the explanatory postscript to the *xiaoshuo* list:

The *xiaoshuo* tradition probably originated from the street-talk and alley-conversation (*jie tan xiang yu* 街談巷語) gleaned by minor officers (*baiguan* 稗官) of the Zhou 周 times.<sup>18</sup>

Confucius said: "Even in small talks there is something worth heeding. If you, however,

<sup>15</sup> The version of HSYWZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted under the title of *Qian Han Shu Yiwen Zhi* 前漢書藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of History of the Former Han Dynasty) in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB. For the *xiaoshuo* list in HSYWZ, see Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, pp. 43-45.

<sup>16</sup> The ten schools listed in HSYWZ are in turn as follows: the Confucianist 儒家, the Daoist 道家, the Necromancers (Yin-yang Jia 陰陽家), the Legalist (*Fa Jia* 法家), the Logician (*Ming Jia* 名家), the Mohist (*Mo Jia* 墨家), the Diplomatist (*Zongheng Jia* 縱橫家), the Miscellanist (*Za Jia* 雜家), the Agriculturalist (*Nong Jia* 農家), and the *xiaoshuo* writer (*Xiaoshuo Jia* 小說家). This translation of the ten schools listed in *Han Shu* is primarily based on that of Chin-Tang Lo (1980: 127) except for "Zongheng Jia" and "Xiaoshuo Jia", which are respectively translated by Lo as "writer of politics", and "essayist".

<sup>17</sup> The fifteen works grouped under the category of *xiaoshuo* are *Yi Yin Shuo* 伊尹說 (Accounts of Yi Yin) in 27 *juan*, *Yuzi Shuo* 鬻子說 (The Sayings of Yuzi) in 19 *juan*, *Zhou Kao* 周考 (Records of the Zhou Dynasty) in 76 *juan*, the *Qingshizi* 青史子 (The Writings of Qingshizi) in 57 *juan*, the *Shi Kuang* 師曠 (Writings of Shi Kuang) in 6 *juan*, the *Wuchengzi* 務成子 (Writings of Wuchengzi) in 11 *juan*, the *Songzi* 宋子 (Writings of Songzi) in 18 *juan*, *Tianyi* 天乙 (Records of the Yin Times) in 3 *juan*, *Huangdi Shuo* 黃帝說 (The Sayings of the Yellow Emperor) in 40 *juan*, *Fengchan Fangshuo* 封禪方說 (Records of Sacrificial Offerings to Heaven and Earth) in 18 *juan*, *Daizhaochen Raoxin Shu* 待詔臣饒心術 (*Arts of Heart* by Rao, the Adviser) in 25 *juan*, *Daizhaochen An Cheng Weiyangshuo* 待詔臣安成未央術 (*Arts of Daoist Way of Life* by An Cheng, the Adviser) in 1 *juan*, *Chen Shou Zhouji* 臣壽周紀 (Shou's Accounts of the Zhou Dynasty) in 7 *juan*, *Yu Chu Zhou Shuo* 虞初周說 (Yu Chu's Tales from the Zhou Dynasty) in 943 *juan*, *Baijia* 百家 (One Hundred Schools of Writings) in 139 *juan*, which total 1390 *juan* in all rather than 1380 *juan* as noted in HSYWZ. See Lu Xun (1981: 12) at Note 17 for an explanation of the *juan* number in HSYWZ *xiaoshuo* list.

<sup>18</sup> According to An Zuozhang 安作璋 (1990: 306), *baiguan* 稗官 were minor officers of the Zhou dynasty (ca. 11<sup>th</sup> century – 256 B.C), whose job was to collect jokes, legends, anecdotes, folktales and folksongs current among the people and report them to the ruling class for their reference. *Bai* means 'fine rice', and the street-talk and alley-conversation being trivial and insignificant, officers whose duty was to glean them were therefor referred to as *baiguan*. For an excellent evidential study of *baiguan* in relation to the *xiaoshuo* genre, see Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (1963:265-280).

have a long way ahead of you, it might lead you astray and get you lost in the mire. That is why gentlemen do not take to it," although they do not reject it altogether, either. They have sayings and discourses of petty country intellectuals gathered together for future reference. Even in the talks and opinions of woodcutters and mad men, one may find something worth jotting down.<sup>19</sup>

Ban Gu's categorisation of *xiaoshuo* as one of the ten schools of philosophical writings, and his speculation on the origins and value of the *xiaoshuo* tradition have been discussed by some contemporary scholars from an ontological perspective<sup>20</sup> as evidence for *xiaoshuo* writings having attained a generic sense of fiction by the early years of the Eastern Han 東漢 dynasty (25AD-220).<sup>21</sup> However, on closer examination of the titles, the few extant fragments, and the laconic descriptions made by Ban Gu of the fifteen books, it is clear that these books are of a discursive and heterogeneous nature. As Leo Tak-tung Chan (1998: 7) noted, "None of them are narratives pure and simple."

That the word *xiaoshuo* did not acquire the generic sense of fiction in Han times does not negate the fact that it has generally been used as a cataloguing term since then to refer to any writings which have been considered to be worth preserving but have seemed incongruous with any one of the nine philosophical schools of those times.<sup>22</sup> This tradition of book classification established by Ban Gu was faithfully transmitted and closely observed by scholars of later dynasties in their compilation of bibliographies for the official histories, although, with the passage of time, the range of writings categorised as *xiaoshuo* became wider than that of HSYWZ.

A good example of this is SSJJZ in four *juan*, compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643) and other scholars under the supervision of Changsun Wuji 長孫無忌 (?-659). Here, writings are grouped into the four categories of *jing* 經 (Confucian classics), *shi* 史 (Records of Historical Events), *zi* 子 (philosophical writings), and *ji*

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<sup>19</sup> Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 45. The translation of this passage is based on those of Lu Xun (1959: 3) and Campany (1996: 132). Some minor changes are made.

<sup>20</sup> See Yang Yi 楊義 (1995: 5), Lin Chen 林辰 (1998: 45-47), and Xu Keqian 徐克謙 (2000:60).

<sup>21</sup> The Han 漢 dynasty (206BC-220AD) is divided between the Western Han 西漢 (206BC-25AD), also called the Former Han 前漢, with Chang'an 長安 as the capital, and the Eastern Han, also called the Latter Han 後漢, with Luoyang 洛陽 as the capital.

<sup>22</sup> As a group, these works listed as belonging to *xiaoshuo* in HSYWZ were denied the dignity of being considered as one of the nine Han schools of learning. In the postscript to the section of ten schools of philosophical writings, Ban Gu claims: "Only nine schools of them are worth looking at." (*ke guan zhe jiu jia er yi* 可觀者九家而矣). See Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 45 for this comment.

集 (miscellaneous works) with *xiaoshuo* works placed within the "Zi" group.<sup>23</sup> Following Ban Gu's idea of *xiaoshuo*, Wei Zheng listed twenty-five works as *xiaoshuo*, including *Yan Danzi* 燕丹子 (Prince Dan of the Yan State), *Suoyu* 瑣語 (Assorted Sayings), *Guozi* 郭子 (The Writings of Guozi), *Xiaolin* 笑林 (A Forest of Jokes), *Jieyi* 解頤 (Games for Fun), *Shishuo* 世說 (Tales of the World), *Xiaoshuo* 小說 (Petty Talk), and *Gujin Yishu* 古今藝術 (Arts of the Past and Present).<sup>24</sup> With records of sayings as well as descriptions of various arts and games incorporated, as noted in Lu Xun (1981: 7), the *xiaoshuo* list here covers an even wider range than that in HSYWZ. Although the list is made primarily in line with Ban Gu's practice in HSYWZ, there are also some distinctive features about SSJJZ. The most outstanding is the removal from the *xiaoshuo* section of records of historical happenings, which was mixed up with miscellaneous writings in HSYWZ. With historical elements reduced to a minimum, after Han, *xiaoshuo* began to emerge as a tool primarily for entertainment, explanation, and edification. Even in works which were "predominantly aphoristic or discursive in content," as DeWoskin observed (1986: 424), there appeared "in them examples of the narrative content which was to become the central feature of the *xiaoshuo* in the future". These are signs of *xiaoshuo* writings developing into a genre independent from historical and philosophical writings.<sup>25</sup>

During the Later Jin 後晉 dynasty (936-947) of the Five Dynasties, a history of the Tang dynasty known as *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang Dynasty) was compiled under the supervision of Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946).<sup>26</sup> The *Jiu Tang Shu Jingji Zhi* 舊唐書經籍志 (The Bibliographical Section of *Old History of the Tang*

<sup>23</sup> The quadripartite system of bibliographical classification (*jing shi zi ji si bu* 經史子集四部), which was first developed from the Wei dynasty and then employed by Wei Zheng in his SSJJZ, has been the most widely accepted standard for bibliographers of ancient works in China since then.

<sup>24</sup> None of them dated earlier than the Jin 晉 Dynasty (265-420) except *Yan Danzi* which is traditionally considered to be a Han product. For Wei Zheng's discourse on *xiaoshuo*, see Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 75.

<sup>25</sup> DeWoskin (1974: 205-206) lists quotations from the *Guozi* 郭子 (The Writings of Guozi) as an example for the embodiment in one of the earliest books recognized as *xiaoshuo* of some of the qualities of fiction.

<sup>26</sup> The *Tang Shu* 唐書 (History of the Tang Dynasty) compiled during the Later Jin dynasty is conventionally called *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書, (Old History of the Tang Dynasty) to avoid any confusion with the *Tang Shu* compiled under the supervision of the Song scholar of Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 (999-1078), which is generally known as *Xin Tang Shu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang Dynasty.)

*Dynasty*, hereafter TSJJZ)<sup>27</sup> is essentially an abridged and modified version of the former catalogue book with the prefaces and notes of the *Gujin Shulu* 古今書錄 (A List of Books of the Past and Present) omitted.<sup>28</sup> With thirteen titles in 90 *juan* included in it, the "*Xiaoshuo*" section of TSJJZ<sup>29</sup> differs from that of SSJJZ only in that works no longer extant by that time are omitted and *Bowu Zhi* 博物志 (Knowledge-broadening Records)<sup>30</sup> formerly classified belonging to the *zajia* 雜家 (the School of Miscellaneous Writings) is categorised as a *xiaoshuo* work.<sup>31</sup>

*Xin Tangshu Yiwen Zhi* 新唐書藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of New History of the Tang Dynasty, hereafter TSYWZ),<sup>32</sup> compiled by the great Song scholar Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), marks a further verification of *xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term in bibliographical compilation of official history. With many new titles added, the *xiaoshuo* list in TSYWZ is increased to thirty-nine works, far longer than Ban Gu's list of fifteen works, Wei Zheng's list of twenty-five, and Liu Xu's list of thirteen. Of those newly added to the *xiaoshuo* list are twenty-four *zhiguai* works dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century, which had otherwise been categorised as belonging to *zazhuan* 雜傳 (miscellaneous records) of the *shi bu* 史部 (group of historical works) in SSJJZ and TSJJZ.<sup>33</sup>

The inclusion of tales and accounts of ghosts and spirits in the *xiaoshuo* section of the *zi bu* 子部 (group of philosophical works) in TSYWZ is believed to have been more motivated by Ouyang Xiu's personal desire to purge unreliable materials from the histories than by any of revolutionary thinking on his part about the nature of the *xiaoshuo*.<sup>34</sup> It is now difficult to say for sure out of what motivation Ouyang Xiu

<sup>27</sup> The version of TSJJZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one included in *Jiu Tang Shu*, pp. 1961-2084. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1975.

<sup>28</sup> *Gujin Shulu* was compiled by the Tang scholar Wu Jing 毋覓. For a brief account of the relationship between TSJJZ and *Gujin Shulu*, see the preface to TSJJZ in Liu Xu (1975: 1961-1966).

<sup>29</sup> For a complete list of the *xiaoshuo* works in TSJJZ, see Liu Xu *et. al.* (1975: 2036).

<sup>30</sup> *Bowu Zhi* in 10 *juan* is generally attributed to the Jin scholar Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300AD).

<sup>31</sup> For a brief account of differences between SSJJZ and TSJJZ in cataloguing *xiaoshuo* works, see Lu Xun (1981: 7).

<sup>32</sup> The version of TSYWZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted under the title of *Tang Shu Yiwen Zhi* 唐書藝文志 and included in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB.

<sup>33</sup> Of the twenty-four works, fifteen of them in 115 *juan* are devoted to accounts of ghosts and spirits, such as *Liyi Zhuan* 列異傳 (Accounts of Marvels) *Zhenyi Zhuan* 甄異傳 (Accounts of Identified Marvels), and *Xu Qi Xie Ji* 續齊諧記 (A Sequel to *Qi Xie Ji*), and nine of them in 70 *juan* to divine retributions, such as *Ganying Ji* 感應記 (Records of Divine Retributions), and *Jingyi Ji* 旌異記 (Tales Exemplifying Marvels).

<sup>34</sup> See DeWoskin (1986: 424) and Laura Hua Wu (1995: 341).

performed this reshuffling. It is clear, however, that with writings ranging from anecdotes, jokes and assorted sayings to accounts of the supernatural and tales of the marvellous, all incorporated into the *xiaoshuo* section, this rearrangement opened up the *xiaoshuo* catalogue to an even wider scope of writing, much of which had long been undifferentiated from philosophical and historical writings.

- Semantic basis for *xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term

As we will see, the selection of *xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term is a natural result of a careful semantic selection in classical Chinese. The discursive and miscellaneous features (mixtures of myths/legends with historical records, jokes with anecdotes, facts with fiction) of the works listed as *xiaoshuo* in bibliographical sections of official history books fit in well with the denotations and connotations with which the two Chinese characters *xiaoshuo* 小說 are loaded.

Let us start with the character "小" (*xiao*). In *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 (Explaining Words and Analysing Characters, hereafter SWJZ),<sup>35</sup> this character is interpreted as "tiny or tininess of things" (*wu zhi wei ye* 物之微也),<sup>36</sup> indistinguishable from its modern meaning.

The character "說" (*shuo*) is richer semantically. Seen from its internal structure, "說" is composed of two parts with the left-sided radical "言" (*yan*) "deriving from the radical 'kou' 口 (mouth)" (*yan...cong kou* 言...從口),<sup>37</sup> and the right-sided part "兌" denoting "speech/speaking" (*dui shuo ye* 兌說也)<sup>38</sup>. Thus, "speech" or "speaking" constitutes the basic meaning of *shuo*. This seems to indicate that *xiaoshuo* materials may have originally existed orally before coming into the written form, as speculated in HSYWZ.

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<sup>35</sup> SWJZ was the first methodical dictionary of Chinese characters compiled by the Eastern Han lexicographer Xu Shen 許慎 (fl. 120AD), who singled out 540 of component parts of the written characters as radicals and arranged characters having the same radical as their component parts into the same group named "bu" 部 (section). Unless otherwise noted, the version of SWJZ referred to in this paper is the one reprinted in two volumes from a Song copy under the title of *Shuowen Jiezi Zhen Ben* 說文解字真本 (SWJZ: an Authentic Edition), included in Vols. 29-30 of *Sibu Beiyao* 四部備要 (Essentials of the Four Division).

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in "Di Er Shang" 第二上 (the first half of *Juan* 2) of SWJZ.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in "Di San Shang" 第三上 (the first half of *Juan* 3) of SWJZ.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in "Di Ba Shang" 第八上 (the first half of *Juan* 8) of SWJZ.



Significantly, the right-sided component of the character "說" (*shuo*), "'兌' (*dui*)" is interpreted in the *Yi Jing* 易經 (The Book of Changes) as 'witch/witchcraft' (*wu* 巫) and/or "kou" 口 (mouth)," (*yi yue dui wei wu wei kou* 易曰兌為巫為口),<sup>39</sup> which can account perhaps for the supernatural or shamanistic connotations the character *shuo* had at that time. Even in the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 (The Writings of Hanfeizi), one can find items in the "Chushuo" 儲說 (A Collection of Tales) and "Shuolin" 說林 (A Forest of Tales) chapters taking on fantastic or supernatural features.

The character "說" is interpreted in SWJZ as "釋" (*shuo shi ye* 說釋也),<sup>40</sup> which means "to explain or clarify" (*shi jie ye* 釋解也).<sup>41</sup> This interpretation is itself a good explanation for why throughout Chinese ancient philosophical writings such as the *Laozi* 老子 (The Writings of Laozi), the *Zhuangzi*, the *Liezi* 列子 (The Writings of Liezi), the *Mengzi* 孟子 (The Writings of Mencius), and the *Hanfeizi* are interspersed with *xiaoshuo* materials such as myths, jokes, fables, parables, legends, and folk tales.

These *xiaoshuo* items, short and simple as they appear, are pregnant with meaning, and the incorporation of them into philosophical works not only makes some otherwise insipid and obscure writings easier to understand, but more interesting to read as well. This entertainment function of *xiaoshuo* also has its semantic basis inherent in the character "說" itself. Apart from meaning "speak/speech", and "explain/explanation", this character carries the connotation of "entertain/entertainment". In this case, it is pronounced in the same way as the character "悅" which means "please/pleased". In fact, these two characters are interchangeable in classical Chinese. As noted by Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1981: 93) in his *Shuowen Jiezi Zhu* 說文解字注 (An Annotated Edition of SWJZ), "*Shuoshi* 說釋 means *yueyi* 悅懌"<sup>42</sup>... *Shuoshi* 說釋 has the meaning of *kaijie* 開解 (divert somebody from boredom/worrimment), hence the interpretation of *shuo* 說 as *xiyue*

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in the first half of *Juan 3* of SWJZ.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in the first half of *Juan 2* of SWJZ.

<sup>42</sup> The earliest recorded appearance of the word "yueyi" is found in a song named "Kuibian" 頌弁 (A Leather Hat Worn High) in the "Xiaoya" 小雅 (Lesser Ya) division of the *Shi Jing* 詩經 (The Book of Songs). For this poem, see Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1985: 109).

喜悦 (happy and gay)" (*shuoshi ji yueyi ...shuoshi zhe kaijie zhi yi gu wei xiyue* 說釋即悅懌.....說釋者開解之意故為喜悅).

On the basis of the above semantic analysis of these two characters, the word "xiaoshuo" might be defined as "short discourses/texts of less importance made to amuse people and/or explain ideas". Such a definition covers the most fundamental features of what are categorized as *xiaoshuo* in catalogue books of ancient Chinese official history and tallies well with those in *Xin Lun* and *Han Shu*. From this, we can see that the use of *xiaoshuo* as a cataloguing term in Chinese traditional bibliography is far from being an arbitrary or makeshift choice. Rather, it is a result of a careful semantic selection made by successive generations of scholars.

- *Zhiguai* as a sub-genre of *xiaoshuo*

*Zhiguai* as a genre of supernatural tales in the literary language, has its own rich tradition, with specific narrative conventions and themes. As is the case with the word *xiaoshuo*, the first recorded appearance of *zhiguai* is found in the *Zhuangzi*. In the "Xiaoyaoyou" 逍遙游 (Carefree Wandering) chapter of this book, the word *zhiguai* is used to refer to tales of marvels ascribed to Qi Xie 齊諧: "Qi Xie was the compiler of a book entitled *Zhiguai*" (*Qi Xie zhe zhiguai zhe ye* 齊諧者志怪者也).<sup>43</sup>

In contrast, the term *zhiguai xiaoshuo* came about at a much later time. To the best of my knowledge, the first person to use this term is the Tang writer Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803?-863). In the preface to his *Youyang Zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Assorted Anecdotes from the Youyang Caves), he frankly admitted, "What I am not ashamed of writing and reading is *zhiguai xiaoshuo*" (*gu yi er bu chi zhe yi zhiguai xiaoshuo zhi shu ye* 固役而不恥者抑志怪小說之書也).<sup>44</sup>

Judging by its contents, however, *Youyang Zazu* is itself a discursive collection of accounts and tales of the anomalous mixed with miscellaneous notes and

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<sup>43</sup> Vol. 054 of GJCS, p.1. As annotated by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842-1918), there exists two different interpretations of this statement: one interprets Qi Xie as the compiler of a book entitled *Zhiguai*, on which my translation is based; the other as a book name of a collection of *zhiguai* tales, and accordingly, the translation would be like "Qi Xie is a book devoted to records of the strange". See Vol. 054 of GJCS, p.1 for Wang's annotations.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen 丁錫根 (1996: 301).

anecdotes, which are mainly of a descriptive and expository character. It follows that neither *zhiguai* nor *zhiguai xiaoshuo* is used here to designate strange writings of a purely narrative and fictional quality as these terms are understood today. Regardless of this, the emergence of the term *zhiguai xiaoshuo* at least indicates the need to narrow down *xiaoshuo* writings to a more definable area, and the deliberate use of *zhiguai* as the pre-modifier in this term reveals at the same time Duan's recognition of *zhiguai* as a sub-category of *xiaoshuo* writings although both *zhiguai* and *xiaoshuo* themselves, and the boundary between them as well, need further clarification.

A new precedent in *xiaoshuo* bibliographical compilation was set in TSYWZ, where Ouyang Xiu incorporated *zhiguai* works of the Six Dynasties which had previously been placed in the *shi bu* into the *xiaoshuo* division of the *zi bu*. This rearrangement made, for the first time in the history of classical Chinese fiction, a link between *zhiguai* titles and the *xiaoshuo* genre,<sup>45</sup> and resulted in a *xiaoshuo* section that contained "predominantly imaginative narratives of the sort we comfortably recognise as fiction."<sup>46</sup>

Although Ouyang Xiu included what were later labelled as *zhiguai xiaoshuo* in his *xiaoshuo* section, he did not make any explanations or give any reasons for this arrangement, nor did he attempt a subdivision of the *xiaoshuo* works. As a result, the relationship between *xiaoshuo* and *zhiguai* remained vague.

The relationship between them was not made clear until the Ming dynasty when Hu Yinglin attempted the earliest known systematic classification of *xiaoshuo* literature.<sup>47</sup> He divided *xiaoshuo* into six categories with *zhiguai* works listed first among five other subtypes, and provided a number of examples to illustrate his idea about this classification:

The *xiaoshuo* group is further classified into several subcategories. The first is *zhiguai* and works of this type are *Soushen* 搜神, *Shuyi* 述異, *Xuanshi* 宣室, and *Youyang* 酉陽.<sup>48</sup> The second is *chuanqi*, and works of this type are *Feiyan* 飛燕, *Taizhen* 太真, *Cui Ying* 崔鶯,

<sup>45</sup> Laura Hua Wu (1995: 341)

<sup>46</sup> DeWoskin (1986: 424)

<sup>47</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Hu's generic study of *xiaoshuo*, see Laura Hua Wu (1995).

<sup>48</sup> The shortened titles of the *zhiguai* works listed by Hu as examples most probably refer to *Soushen Ji* 搜神記 (In Search of Spirits, hereafter SSJ) by Gan Bao 干寶 (286?-336), *Shuyi Ji* 述異記 (Stories of Marvels) by Zu Chongzhi 祖沖之 (429-500), *Xuanshi Ji* 宣室志 (Records from the Central Chamber) by Zhang Du 張讀 (834-886) and *Youyang Zazu* by Duan Chengshi.



and *Huoyu* 霍玉.<sup>49</sup> The third is *zalu* 雜錄 (Miscellaneous Records), and works of this type are *Shishuo* 世說, *Yulin* 語林, *Suoyan* 瑣言, and *Yinhua* 因話.<sup>50</sup> The fourth is *congtao* 叢談 (Assorted Talks), and works of this type are *Rongzhai* 容齋, *Mengxi* 夢溪, *Donggu* 東谷, and *Daoshan* 道山.<sup>51</sup> The fifth is *bianding* 辯訂 (evidential research), and works of this type are *Shu Pu* 鼠璞, *Ji Le* 雞肋, *Zi Xia* 資暇, and *Bian Yi* 變疑.<sup>52</sup> The last is *zhengui* 箴規 (moral admonitions), and works of this type are *Jiaxun* 家訓, *Shifan* 世範, *Quanshan* 勸善, and *Xingxin* 省心.<sup>53</sup> The two sub-genres of *congtao* and *zalu* are most easy to be confused with each other. Besides, they usually possess certain features also found with the other four sub-genres. As compared, however, they are less self-contained, and are thus not to be blended into any one of the four subtypes. As for *zhiguai* and *chuanqi*, it is even easier for them to be confused with each other, for one can find both types of tale in one work, and even in one tale one can find features shared by both genres. Therefore, attention should be paid to the dominant features while classifying a tale with both *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* elements in it.<sup>54</sup>

Hu's classification, in fact, reaffirms the status of *zhiguai* as a sub-class of *xiaoshuo*, but with *Youyang Zazu*, a hodgepodge of desultory writings, listed as a *zhiguai* work, the use of *zhiguai* as a generic term remains questionable.

<sup>49</sup> The four *chuanqi* stories are usually referred in catalogue books to as *Feiyan Waizhuan* 飛燕外傳 (An Unofficial Biography of Zhao Feiyan), a Jin product but traditionally attributed to the Han scholar Ling Xuan 伶玄, *Taizhen Waizhuan* 太真外傳 (An Unofficial Biography of Lady Yang) by Yue Shi 樂史 (930-1007), *Yingying Zhuan* 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Yingying) by Yuan Zhen 元稹 (775-831), and *Huo Xiaoyu Zhuan* 霍小玉傳 (The Story of Huo Xiaoyu) by Jiang Fang 蔣防 (fl. 815).

<sup>50</sup> The four *zalu* works mentioned here are most probably *Shishuo Xinyu* 世說新語 (New Tales of the World) by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444), *Yu Lin* 語林 (A Forest of Tales) by Pei Qi 裴啓 (fl. 362), *Beimeng Suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Miscellaneous Notes from Dreams of the North) by Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (fl. 945), *Yinhua Lu* 因話錄 (Records of the Tang Anecdotes) by Zhao Lin 趙璘 (803-?).

<sup>51</sup> The four *congtao* works are generally referred to as *Rongzhai Suibi* 容齋隨筆 (Random Jottings of Rongzhai) by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) whose other name is Rongzhai 容齋, *Mengxi Bitan* 夢溪筆談 (Pen Talks from Mengxi) by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031-1095), *Donggu Suojian* 東谷所見 (Accounts of What's Been Seen at the Eastern Valley) by the Song scholar Li Zhiyan 李之彥, and *Daoshan Qinghua* 道山清話 (Pure Talk of Daoshan) attributed to a Song scholar by the name of Daoshan 道山 (fl.1110).

<sup>52</sup> The four works listed here as belonging to the *Bianding* type are respectively *Shu Pu* 鼠璞 (Uncut Red Jades) by the Song scholar Dai Zhi 戴埴, *Jile Bian* 雞肋編 (Collected Chicken Ribs) by Zhuang Jiyu 莊季裕 (fl. 1135), *Zixia Ji* 資暇集 (Jottings Collected for Leisure Time) by Li Kuanghan 李匡漢 (fl. 880), *Bianyi Zhi* 辨疑志 (Records of Discerning Suspicions) by Lu Changyuan 陸長源 (f. 770.)

<sup>53</sup> The four *zhengui* works are respectively *Yan Shi Jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (Family Instructions for the Yan Clan) by Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-590), *Yuanshi Shifan* 袁氏世範 (Examples Set by Yuan for Later Generations) by the Song scholar Yuan Cai 袁采, *Quanshan Lu* 勸善錄 (Records of Admonitions and Exhortations) by the Song scholar Wang Minzhong 王敏中, and *Xingxin Zayan* 省心雜言 (Assorted Records of Introspection) by the Song scholar Li Bangxian 李邦獻.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Hu Yinglin (1958: 374). This translation is adapted from Laura Hua Wu (1995: 352-353).

During the reign of Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1736-1795), Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724-1805) was put in charge of compiling SKQS.<sup>55</sup> In *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyaoyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Annotated Catalogue of the Complete Library of the Four Treasures, hereafter ZMTY), Ji Yun classified *xiaoshuo* in three categories:<sup>56</sup>

- (1). *zashi* 雜事 (miscellaneous accounts),<sup>57</sup>
- (2). *yiwen* 異聞 (records of the strange),<sup>58</sup> and
- (3). *suoyu* 瑣語 (miscellaneous notes of trivial matters)<sup>59</sup>

As Lu Xun observed (1981: 9), Ji Yun's tripartition of the *xiaoshuo* is actually of a binary nature, with *zashi* and *suoyu*, which are both miscellaneous accounts and anecdotes, juxtaposed against *yiwen* which is mostly accounts and tales of the strange and supernatural. Compared with Hu Yinglin's hex-classification, Ji Yun's division of *xiaoshuo* into three categories, with *yiwen* primarily devoted to strange tales, is undoubtedly of a much more homogeneous quality and thus of more generic significance.

One might wonder why Ji Yun chose the word *yiwen* instead of *zhiguai* as a generic term to denote strange writings. There are two possible reasons for this choice. On the one hand, Ji Yun has an intention of manifesting the difference of his classification from Hu Yinglin's model through the use of different words, and on the other hand, the word *yiwen* might sound more acceptable in traditional China to the ear of orthodox intellectuals who believed in Confucius' disapproval of talking of "prodigies, feats of strength, disorder, and gods and spirits" (*zi bu yu guai li luan shen* 子不語怪力亂神).<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The version of SKQS referred to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in 1,500 volumes and published by Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社 in 1987.

<sup>56</sup> The version of ZMTY referred to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vols. 004-009 of GJCS. For his *xiaoshuo* classification in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2882.

<sup>57</sup> Grouped into the *zashi* section are such titles as *Shishuo Xinyu*, *Yinhua Lu*, *Beimeng Suoyan*, *Daoshan Qinghua*, and *Jile Bian*, which are mainly made up of folk proverbs, wise sayings, jokes and fables, accounts of social customs and local legends.

<sup>58</sup> The *yiwen* section includes such *zhiguai* works as SHJ, *Mutianzi Zhuan* 穆天子傳 (The Chronicle of King Mu), *Shenyi Jing* 神異經 (Book of the Supernatural and Magic), SSJ, etc.

<sup>59</sup> Included within the *suoyu* section are such as *Youyang Zazu*, *Bowu Zhi*, and *Shuyi Ji* 述異記 (Accounts of the Anomalous) by Ren Fang 任昉 (460-508).

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in the "Shu'er" 述而 chapter, *Juan 7* of the *Analects*. See Vol. 031 of GJCS, p. 46.

We do not know whether Confucius himself believed or not in the existence of supernatural beings, but we do know his injunction for the avoidance of them.<sup>61</sup> Confucius' disapproval of talking about ghosts and spirits and his attitude of avoidance had long been an unsurpassable hurdle to *zhiguai* writings in its perennial struggle for a proper place for itself in the history of classical Chinese literature. It was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when orthodox Confucianism was strongly challenged and severely criticised that *zhiguai* became a subject of academic study by literary historians, anthropologists, and folklorists for the first time in its more than two thousand years of history.

The establishment of *zhiguai* as a genre as we understand it today should be first and foremost attributed to the efforts of Lu Xun, who creates the generic term *zhiren* to denote accounts and tales of men as opposed to *zhiguai* which are tales of the supernatural and magic. What is more, he devotes two chapters in his *Zhongguo Xiaoshuo Shilüe* to classical Chinese supernatural fiction, exploring not only the reasons for its birth and rise, but also listing quite a few representative *zhiguai* works for textual and evidential analysis. Since then *zhiguai* has been widely accepted as an independent genre of classical Chinese fiction.

## Section 2: *Zhiguai* in embryo

- *Zhiguai*: origins and sources

*Zhiguai*, as one of the earliest and most prolific genres of *xiaoshuo*, underwent four distinct stages of development over more than two thousand years. These can be described as the embryonic, the formative, the mature, and the climactic stages successively. The first stage lasted about six hundred years from the early Warring States 戰國 period (475-221BC) to the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty in 220AD.

During this period, the *zhiguai* in embryo existed mainly in the form of myths and legends, fables and parables, and anecdotes. The supernatural fiction of most

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<sup>61</sup> Confucius was quoted in the "Yongye" 雍也 chapter of the *Analects* as saying: "Devote yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and show your respect for ghosts and deities while keeping them at a distance." (*wu min zhi yi jing guishen er yuan zhi* 務民之義敬鬼神而遠之). For this quotation, see Vol. 031 of GJCS, p.20.

countries originates from myths and folk legends, and the *zhiguai* literature in traditional China is no exception.<sup>62</sup> In earliest times, primitive Chinese observed natural phenomena and changes that were beyond their comprehension, so they developed explanations in the form of stories which have been generally described as myths. In a myth, a superhuman being was usually the key of interpretation. Around this key were woven numerous events bringing out the chief attributes of the deity to whom obedience and submission were owed and for whom glorification and worship were invoked. Following cultural development, these narrations and descriptions became more fleshed, involved, and prolonged. Besides enriching the content of primitive religion and fostering the growth of primitive art, myths also provided inspirations for early folk literature, which was in turn employed and incorporated by *zhiguai* writers in their tales and stories.

Many Chinese myths concern the origins of human beings, and disasters happening to them. In the later myths, the principal characters had an increasing tendency to resemble human beings. As deities gave way to men, ancient heroes and heroines began to loom large in these primitive narratives. Accounts of heroic adventures made by semi-divine and semi-human beings were later merged with tales of social phenomena that may have been inspired by historical happenings and became part of a folklore shared amongst all the members of the community, and by and by developed into legends.

Myths and legends first arose amongst the people, before spreading from mouth to mouth through 'street-talk and alley-conversation'. As they were passed on orally, they were constantly revised and embellished. Ban Gu traced back their recorded history to the Zhou dynasty, but he did not provide further evidence to prove his accounts nor is there much evidence available today for us to support his speculations. Ancient China produced hundreds and thousands of myths and legends, but few collections of myths and legends were made then. Fortunately, many of them were preserved in fragments in ancient writings of diverse types.

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<sup>62</sup> Lu Xun (1981: 17).

Around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, fragmentary myths and legends began to appear in historical, philosophical, geographical and "knowledge-broadening" (*bowu* 博物) works. Among them the most representative and influential in the preservation of ancient Chinese myth and folklore is SHJ<sup>63</sup>. There are numerous records of strange lands, strange peoples, and strange happenings in SHJ, and fragmentary references are also frequently made to superhuman/supernatural beings in this book.<sup>64</sup> The most famous of all the myths are those of Xi Wang Mu 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West), a superhuman being with a human face, a leopard's tail, and tiger's teeth who lived on Mt. Yu 玉山.<sup>65</sup> Myths of Xi Wang Mu were elaborated upon and incorporated in later literature of the supernatural, where this originally semi-human, semi-divine being was eventually developed into one of the best known goddesses in Chinese myth.

Besides the myth about Queen Mother of the West, in SHJ there are also extremely valuable, although somewhat inconsistent and self-conflicting, genealogical records of the ancient Chinese thearchy centered around Huangdi 黄帝, Zhuanxu 顓頊, Diku 帝嚳, Yao 堯, Shun 舜, etc. Descriptions of their physical appearances and accounts of their adventures in SHJ provide inexhaustible sources for *zhiguai* writers of later generations to draw on. No wonder that SHJ has long been held to be "the ancestor of ancient and contemporary writings of the strange"

<sup>63</sup> The version of SHJ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one in 18 *juan*, edited and annotated by Yuan Ke and published under the title of *Shanhai Jing Jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (An Annotated and Collated Edition of SHJ) by Shanghai Guji Chubanshe in 1980.

<sup>64</sup> In traditional Chinese bibliographical literature, SHJ is variously categorized as a work of "geomorphology" (*xingfa* 形法), "geography" (*dili* 地理), and "fiction" (*xiaoshuo*). For example, it is listed as containing 13 *juan* and classified as a geo-morphological work in HSYWZ, in SSJZ listed as containing 23 *juan* and grouped into the geographical section of historical writings, and in ZMTY listed as containing 18 *juan* and classified as a *xiaoshuo* work.

<sup>65</sup> Three references with conflicting details and attributes are made in the "Xi Ci Shan Jing" 西次山經 chapter, the "Hainei Bei Jing" 海內北經 chapter, and the "Dahuang Xi Jing" 大荒西經 chapter to a superhuman being by the name of Xi Wang Mu in SHJ. Besides the one mentioned above, Xi Wang Mu is described in the other two versions respectively as having a human face, a tiger's body, nine tails, and tiger's teeth, and as a deity "standing by a stool and wearing a tiara" (*ti ji er dai sheng* 梯幾而戴勝) with three blue birds flying from north of Mt. Kunlun 崑崙 with food for her.



(*gu jin yu guai zhi zu* 古今語怪之祖),<sup>66</sup> and “the most ancient *xiaoshuo* in China.” (*xiaoshuo zhi zui gu zhe er* 小說之最古者耳)<sup>67</sup>

As is the case with earlier writings of ancient China, the dating and authorship of SHJ has long been a focus for debate. The Han scholar Liu Xin 劉歆 (?-23)<sup>68</sup> ascribed it to the Great Yu 禹, the legendary founder of the Xia 夏 dynasty (ca. 22<sup>nd</sup> Century BC-17<sup>th</sup> Century BC), and his assistant Yi 益.<sup>69</sup> Millennia later, this work was edited by Liu Xin into the present eighteen-*juan* book.<sup>70</sup> This account of the authorship and dating was accepted as fact by scholars throughout successive dynasties.<sup>71</sup>

It was not until the Sui 隋 dynasty (581-618) that Liu Xin's accounts of the dating and authorship of the book were for the first time called into question, by Yan Zhitui (1980: 438). In the “Shuzheng” 書正篇 chapter of *Yan Shi Jiaxun*, he listed as evidence and reasons for his rejection, such place names as Changsha 長沙, Lingling 零陵, Guiyang 桂陽, and Zhuji 諸暨, which came into being at a much later time than that of Yu.<sup>72</sup> The later dynasties saw more scholars join Yan in their rejection of the dating and authorship theory proposed by Liu Xin,<sup>73</sup> and although Liu Xin has

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<sup>66</sup> Hu Yinglin (1958: 412).

<sup>67</sup> For this comment on SHJ in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2939.

<sup>68</sup> Liu Xin, whose other name was Liu Xiu 劉秀, together with his father Liu Xiang 劉向 (?77-6B.C.), compiled *Qi Lü* 七律 (Seven Schools of Writings), the earliest recorded catalogue book in China, much of which was later adapted into HSYWZ by Ban Gu.

<sup>69</sup> According to Liu Xin, Yu traveled far and wide in his heroic attempts to regulate and control great floods. He climbed hills and mountains, waded through marshlands, crossed rivers and seas, and encountered countless strange animals, plants and people on the way. After Yu brought the Great flood under control, Yi compiled SHJ as a record of what he and Yu had encountered and experienced. For more details, see Liu Xin's “Shang SHJ Biao” 上山海經表 (A Report on SHJ Presented to the Throne) in Yuan Ke (1980: 477-478).

<sup>70</sup> Yuan Ke's SHJ is basically a newly edited and annotated version of Liu Xin's 18-*juan* SHJ.

<sup>71</sup> See the “Bietong” 別通 chapter of *Lun Heng* 論衡 (Balanced Treatises) by Wang Chong 王充 (27-97AD), *Juan 6* of *Wuyue Chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of the State of Wu and the State of Yue) by the Eastern Han scholar Zhao Ye 趙曄 (?-83AD), “SHJ Xu” 山海經序 (Preface to SHJ) by Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324), *Juan 6* of *Bowu Zhi* by Zhang Hua, *Juan 10* and *Juan 39* of *Shui Jing Zhu* 水經注 (A Commentary to the Book of Waterways) by Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (466-527) and chapter one of *Zhongguo Shenguai Xiaoshuo Tongshi* 中國神怪小說通史 (A General History of Chinese Fiction of the Supernatural) by the contemporary scholar Ouyang Jian 歐陽健.

<sup>72</sup> For comments made by the Qing scholar Hao Yixing 郝懿行 in his “SHJ Jianshu Xu” 山海經箋疏敘 (Preface to SHJ) on Yan's accounts of the dating and authorship, see Ding Xigen (1996: 19-22).

<sup>73</sup> See “SHJ Ba” 山海經跋 (Afterword to SHJ) by You Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194), “SHJ Hou Xu” 山海經後序 (Afterword to SHJ) by Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488-1559), and ZMTY, which are respectively quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 7-8), and in Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2938-2940.

never felt the lack of supporters for his hypothesis,<sup>74</sup> many consider the earliest parts of it to be a product of the early Warring States period,<sup>75</sup> probably written by scholars and "masters of esoteric techniques" (*fangshi* 方士) of the State of Chu 楚<sup>76</sup> or by scholars from the states of Qi 齊 and Lu 魯.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from myths and legends recorded in SHJ, the Warring States period produced a large number of fables, and parables, which are other sources for early *zhiguai* literature, many of which are included in philosophical and miscellaneous writings. Of these works, the *Zhuangzi*, the *Liezi*,<sup>78</sup> and *Lü Shi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The Spring and Autumn Annals of Lü Buwei),<sup>79</sup> are particularly rich in ancient myths, legends, fables, and parables. This tradition continued through to Han times and was well manifested in such philosophical and miscellaneous writings as the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (The Writings of Prince of Huainan),<sup>80</sup> and *Fengsu Tongyi* 風俗通義 (A General Survey of Social Customs, hereafter FSTY).<sup>81</sup>

In the history of Chinese literature, the Warring States period witnessed the most prosperous production of myths, fables, parables, and folk legends. During this period, Chinese society and culture underwent more rapid and drastic changes than ever before. With dukes and princes constantly at war with each other in pursuit of hegemony, state control over people's minds was greatly loosened. This relative freedom of thought and expression paved the way for the rise of different schools of thought. The rivalry of philosophical systems and the opposition between points of

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<sup>74</sup> Among his supporters are the Qing scholar Bi Yuan 畢沅, and the modern scholar Ouyang Jian. For more details, see Ouyang Jian (1997: 9-15), and Bi Yuan's "SHJ Xin Jiaozheng Xu" 山海經新校正序 (Preface to the Newly Collated Edition of SHJ) quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 14-17).

<sup>75</sup> Campany (1996: 34-36), Lin Chen (1992: 12-13), and Wu Zhida 吳志達 (1994: 26).

<sup>76</sup> Yuan Ke (1988: 17).

<sup>77</sup> Xiao Bing 蕭兵 (1992: 20).

<sup>78</sup> The *Liezi*, a Daoist work, is attributed Lie Yukou 列御寇, a philosopher who lived during the Warring States Period. The version of this work I refer to throughout his thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 055 of GJCS.

<sup>79</sup> *Lüshi Chunqiu* in 26 *juan* is a compilation of various schools of thought made under the auspices of Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (?-235BC). The version of this work I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 065 of GJCS.

<sup>80</sup> The *Huainanzi* is a syncretic Daoist work written in the Former Han dynasty by guests attached to the court of Liu An 劉安, Prince of Huainan (179BC-122BC). The version of this work I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted under the title of *Huainan Honglie Jizhu* 淮南洪烈集注 (A Collectively Annotated Edition of the *Huainanzi*), included in Vol. 066 of GJCS.

<sup>81</sup> FSTY, compiled by the Eastern Han historian Ying Zhao 應劭 (140-203?), is reprinted in Vol. 025 of *Sibu Congkan Chubiansuo Ben* 四部叢刊初編縮本 (Collectanea of the Four Divisions: the First Abridged Version, hereafter CBSB), and it is this version of FYZL I refer to throughout this thesis.

view, in turn, provided ample room for discussion and argumentation. As a result of the competition between various schools, academic debates and prose treatises flourished. To back up their arguments and to attract attention, scholars created fables and parables, and also employed myths, legends, folk tales, and records of historical events in their writings to make complicated and abstract philosophy and theory easier to understand. Some of them were so well written that they acquired a high literary value and circulated widely, and remain popular even to this day.

Classical Chinese myths and legends preserved in the early writings mentioned above range widely from myths of floods, miraculous signs of the (natural or human) world, and conflicts between gods and legendary heroes and among gods themselves, to myths of the creation of mankind and the universe. Myths of floods are a theme of universal appeal. “Nüwa Bu Tian” 女媧補天 (Nüwa Mends the Firmament)<sup>82</sup> and “Gun Dao Xirang” 鯀盜息壤 (Gun Steals the Expanding Soil)<sup>83</sup> are good examples of Chinese myths dealing with this theme. In “Nüwa Bu Tian”, there is no mention of why the disastrous floods occur, only that half the firmament collapses and the whole world turns into a vast ocean. Nüwa, the great creator of human beings in Chinese myths, comes to the rescue of her own creatures suffering from the flood and vicious beasts. She melts rocks of five colours to mend the sky, and severs the legs of a giant turtle to prop up the tilted heaven. In “Gun Dao Xirang”, nothing is mentioned of the cause of the flood, either. At the very beginning, we are told that “there occurred a flood that rose as high as the sky.” Gun, a god in Heaven, steals the *xirang*, the expanding soil from the Heavenly Emperor to cover the flooded earth. In great rage, the Heavenly Emperor orders Zhu Rong 祝融, the god of fire, to descend to earth to behead Gun. Out of Gun's body, however, grows Yu, who with the permission of the Heavenly Emperor uses the expanding soil to bring an end to the flood.

Representative of myths and legends about miracles or miraculous signs of the world are “Yu Gong Yi Shan” 愚公移山 (The Old Fool Who Tried to Remove

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Vol. 066 of GJCS, pp. 10-12. Nüwa is a mythic divinity attributed with fashioning the world in primordial times. She is human from the waist up; her lower body is a spiral snake form. The myth of Nüwa mending the firmament appears in the “Lanmi” 覽纂 Chapter in *Juan* 6 of the *Huainanzi*.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Yuan Ke (1980: 472). The myth of Gun's stealing the expanding soil is recorded in the “Hainei Jing” 海內經 chapter, *Juan* 18 of the SHJ.



Mountains)<sup>84</sup> and “Yi Yin Sheng Kongsang” 伊尹生空桑 (Yi Yin Was Born of a Hollow Mulberry Tree).<sup>85</sup> In “Yu Gong Yi Shan”, an old man heads his family in an attempt to remove two mountains which stand in front of his house. His ambition moves the Heavenly Emperor, who sends down two gods to carry away the two mountains. Unlike the Old Fool, who is a mythical character, Yi Yin was a historical figure famous for his talent and wisdom in state management. A sage was usually expected in traditional China to come from a special background, different from that of common people, hence the legendary birth of Yi Yin in a hollow mulberry tree. The legend has it that before the birth of Yi Yin, his mother was warned in a dream by a god of a coming flood and not to look back while fleeing for life. When the flood occurs, however, she fails to follow the god's instruction, and is instantly turned into a mulberry tree. The baby born of the mulberry tree is presented to the king of Youshenshi 有佚氏, who later gives him over to King Tang 湯<sup>86</sup> in return for a marriage proposal King Tang has made to his daughter.

“Kua Fu Zhu Ri” 夸父逐日 (Kua Fu Pursues the Sun)<sup>87</sup> and “Li Bing Dou Jiang Shen” 李冰斗江神 (Li Bing Fights the River Deity)<sup>88</sup> are both stories of conflicts. In the first case, Kua Fu is a giant who pursues the sun and dies of thirst on

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Vol. 055 of GJCS pp. 64-65. This fable appears in the “Tang Wen” 湯問 chapter, in *Juan* 5 of the *Liezi*.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Vol. 065 of GJCS, pp.192-193. The legendary birth of Yi Yin is recorded in the “Benwei” 本味 chapter, in *Juan* 14 of the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. About the word “kongsang”, there are at least four possible interpretations: a place name as evidenced by a town of that name located south of Chenliu 陳留 County of Henan Province; the name of a legendary mountain as recorded in the “Dongshan Jing” 東山經 and “Beishan Jing” 北山經 chapters in SHJ, the “Benjing Xun” 本經訓 chapter of the *Huainanzi*, and the item “Li Jun Shen” 李君神 in *Juan* 9 of FSTY; another name for *se* 瑟, a twenty-five stringed musical instrument of ancient China; a mulberry tree with a hollow trunk as these two Chinese characters literally suggest. I choose to translate *kongsang* in this tale text into “a hollow mulberry tree” because this interpretation fits the context better than the other three. Another reason for this interpretation is that in ancient China, the mulberry tree was widely believed to have certain supernatural and mystical power. Such a belief finds its full expression in the legendary birth of Confucius and Emperor Zhuanxu 顓頊 in a hollow mulberry tree as noted in Izushi Shirohiko 出石誠彦 (1943: 732-733). For more about the symbolic significance of mulberry trees in Chinese mythology, see Xiao Bing (1989: 771-775).

<sup>86</sup> Also known as Chengtang 成湯, he was the first king of the Shang 商 dynasty (ca. 17<sup>th</sup> Century BC-11<sup>th</sup> Century BC).

<sup>87</sup> This myth appears in the “Haiwai Beijing” 海外北經 chapter, in *Juan* 8 of SHJ, quoted in Yuan Ke (1980: 236).

<sup>88</sup> Li Bing, a real figure in Chinese history, is best remembered for the Great Dujian Dam 都江堰, which was built under his supervision when he served as Governor of Shu 蜀 (256-251BC). After his death, he was worshipped as a god. This legend was first recorded in FSTY and later was revised and included *Juan* 882 of TPYL. For the entry of Li Bing in FSTY and TPYL, see Vol. 025 of CBSB, p. 64, and TPYL, p. 4050.

the way. The tragedy of Kua Fu arises from the internal conflict of his limited power and his unlimited ambition. In the case of Li Bing, the conflict takes the external form of a fight between a legendary hero and a god. Unable to tolerate any longer a river deity who demands two virgins as wives each year, Li Bing challenges the god to a fight and finally kills him, thus eliminating the annual threat for the local people.

As is shown from the above-discussed myths and legends, conflicts are found to be essential to the constitution of a textual tension. It is this tension that arouses our interest and creates suspense. With characters involved in conflicts, these myths and legends possess fictional qualities. It must be pointed out, however, that the majority of pre-Han myths and legends, fables and parables remain rather underdeveloped in every way, even if there appears in some pieces like “Yu Gong Yi Shan” and “Yi Yin Sheng Kongsang” a higher level of sophistication and complexity in narration and structural organisation. On the whole, they represent the embryonic stage of the *zhiguai* literature, but with rich resources and fantastic imagination, they prepare the way for the coming of a more mature and better-developed *zhiguai* fiction.



## Chapter Two: Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction of the Six Dynasties

### Section 1: *Soushen Ji* — a *zhiguai* encyclopaedia

The Six Dynasties (220-618) was a time when China underwent frequent dynastic changes.<sup>1</sup> With the fall of the Han dynasty, the dominant position of Confucianism<sup>2</sup> was challenged by Daoist and Buddhist doctrines, and undermined by various shamanistic and superstitious beliefs and practice. It was against this backdrop that *zhiguai* fiction emerged and developed rapidly.

Fiction of that time can be divided into two main categories: *zhiguai* and *zhiren*. Tales of the supernatural and strange evolved from myths and legends, and began to appear from the fourth century. They are in principle folklore, and have their sources in "street talk and alley conversation". The "chit-chat of no great importance" was first recorded by the literati and later edited into book-length collections.

A considerable number of the supernatural tales produced during this period remain short and brief. They usually start with a true-to-history introduction of the time and place, and the characters in them are more often than not found to be real figures in history, so that quite a few of them read like historical accounts. At a time when shamanism was extremely widespread, and deities, ghosts, and spirits were believed to exist in the world "on the other side", people told of strange things as real happenings and scholars recorded them much in the same way as they recorded history.

The magnitude of *zhiguai* production in the Six Dynasties period simply cannot be exaggerated, regardless of the fact that the genre was at an early stage of development in terms of form and content. Among the dozens of collections of supernatural tales of that time, at least five of them were entitled *Zhiguai*.<sup>3</sup> There are

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<sup>1</sup> This preiodisation generally refers to the period from the Wei dynasty (220-265) to the Sui dynasty (581-618) in Chinese history.

<sup>2</sup> Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty 漢武帝 accepted Dong Zhongshu's 董仲舒 (175-105 BC) suggestion that "one hundred schools of thoughts should be deposed and only Confucianism be observed" (*bachu baijia du zun rushu* 罷黜百家獨尊儒術), and from then on, Confucianism occupied a dominant position over all other schools of thought.

<sup>3</sup> They are attributed respectively to Zu Taizhi 祖台之, Kong Yue 孔約 (?), a man of the Zhi clan 殖氏, a man of the Xu clan 許氏, and Cao Pi 曹毗 of the Jin dynasty.

as many as thirty plus extant *zhiguai* collections from this period, but none has come down to us in its original form. As is the case with other categories of classical Chinese fiction, the extant items are preserved in fragments in *leishu*, *congshu*, and *zhushu*, and casually documented in bibliographical sections of official historical books. Among the most influential of the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* collections are *Lieyi Ji* 列異記 (Accounts of Marvels) which is also called *Lieyi Zhuan* 列異傳, SSJ, *Xu Soushen Ji* 續搜神記 (A Sequel to SSJ), *Youming Lu* 幽明錄 (Records of Darkness and Light), *Shuyi Ji* 述異記 (Stories of Marvels),<sup>4</sup> and *Yuanhun Ji* 冤魂記 (Accounts of Avenging Spirits).

- Gan Bao and the twenty-juan text of *Soushen Ji*

The Six Dynasties was a time of shamanism, Daoism, and Buddhism each flourishing and competing with one another, and it was also a time that called for, and produced great *zhiguai* works. SSJ was undoubtedly the most highly esteemed and influential of that time. In terms of size and scope, SSJ was a *zhiguai* encyclopaedia of that time. Compared with earlier strange writings like *Liexian Zhuan* 列仙傳 (Stories of Immortals)<sup>5</sup> and *Lieyi Ji*, SSJ is not only much broader in terms of the range of content but also more sophisticated in narration. The first recorded reference to the SSJ in 30 *juan* appears in “Biography of Gan Bao” in *Juan* 82 of *Jin Shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin Dynasty). According to this biography, Gan Bao, also named Ling Sheng 令升, was a native of Xincai 新蔡 County in present-day Henan Province. Because of his talents, he was promoted to the position of *Zhuzuolahng* 著作郎 (Official Compiler of History). The 20-juan text of *Jin Ji* 晉記 (Annals of the Jin Dynasty) he compiled was highly regarded by his contemporaries.

The most interesting thing about the biography is a record in it of two peculiar stories from the life of Gan Bao: upon the death of his father, his jealous mother pushed his father’s favourite concubine into the grave of her husband. Ten years later

<sup>4</sup> Two *zhiguai* works entitled *Shuyi Ji* were produced during this period of time, one by Zu Chongzhi and the other by Ren Fang as mentioned at Note 51 and 63 of Chapter One. The *Shuyi Ji* here refers to the one by Zu Chongzhi.

<sup>5</sup> This work extant in 2 *juan*, generally attributed to the Western Han scholar Li Xiang 劉向 (?77BC-6AD), was the first *zhiguai* book exclusively devoted to accounts of immortals.

when his mother died, the tomb was opened and the concubine was found still to be alive. After emerging from the grave, she told the sons that over these years, their father cared as much about her as he had done before.<sup>6</sup> Years later, Gan Bao's brother died only to come back to life. Upon his revival, he gave a vivid account of the activities of the gods and spirits he had encountered in Hell and Heaven after he had breathed his last. Obviously the miraculous happenings Gan Bao is said to have experienced personally in his life are recorded in *Jin Shu* as a way of suggesting a direct cause for his lifelong fascination with ghosts and spirits.

In the course of compiling the book, Gan Bao relied primarily on anecdotes, folktales, and ancient books. As he said in the preface to his SSJ, "Although I examine ancient books for past happenings and collect bits and pieces from current happenings, I am afraid that these things are not what I have heard and seen with my own eyes and ears." (*sui kao xian zhi yu zai ji shou yiye yu dangshi gai fei yi er yi mu zhi suo wen du ye* 雖考先志于載籍收遺逸于當時蓋非一耳一目之所聞睹也)<sup>7</sup> To think that Gan Bao compiled SSJ only for amusement and entertainment would be completely wrong. As a matter of fact, Gan Bao collected the stories into a book as "evidence substantial enough to prove the truth of the existence of the supernatural beings". (*yi zu yi ming shendao zhi bu wu* 亦足以明神道之不誣)<sup>8</sup>

Like other genres of classical Chinese fiction, *zhiguai* literature is a half-buried one. Although traditional China produced hundreds of *zhiguai* works, none of the early ones has survived intact. A case in point is SSJ, the original text of which is believed to have come into being around 345 AD,<sup>9</sup> but to have been lost during the Song dynasty.<sup>10</sup> There are four extant versions of SSJ, of which the 20-juan SSJ is the longest and is generally regarded as the closest to Gan Bao's original text.<sup>11</sup> This text is a late Ming edition recompiled by Hu Yinglin from various *leishu* like CXJ,

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<sup>6</sup> A slightly different version of this account is quoted in *Juan* 375 of TPGJ with *Wuxing Ji* 五行記 (Records of The Five Elements) listed as the source book.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 49).

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 50). For more about Gan Bao's life, see Li Jianguo's 李劍國 "Gan Bao Kao" 干寶考 (An Evidential Study of the Life of Gan Bao), in *Wenxue Yichan* 文學遺產 (Literary Heritage), No.2/2001, pp. 14-29.

<sup>9</sup> See Wang Guoliang 王國良 (1978: 19).

<sup>10</sup> See Dewoskin (1974: 92), Wu Zhida (1994: 146), Ouyang Jian (1997: 75), and Lin Chen (1998: 131).

<sup>11</sup> For more about the textual history of SSJ, see Campany (1996), DeWoskin (1974), Fan Ning 範寧 (1964), Li Jianguo (1984), Takeda Akira 竹田晃 (1961), and Wang Guoliang (1984; 1986; 1988).



TPYL, TPGJ, FYZL, etc., and later printed by Hu Zhenheng 胡震亨 in *Mice Huihan* 秘冊匯函 (A Collection of Rare Texts) in 1603. The extant 20-juan SSJ includes 464 items, roughly arranged by subject matter and ranging in length from a couple of lines to a paragraph or more.<sup>12</sup> Topics vary widely from alchemy, divination, filiality, oracles, and retribution to elixirs and panaceas. Although some items are no more than five lines in length and do not have much of a story to tell, quite a few are tales with a strong narrative. In terms of themes and content, these tales can be placed into four general categories:

- (1) Divine reward and retribution,
- (2) Men fighting with supernatural beings,
- (3) Love or marriage between men and non-human beings,
- (4) People rising against tyranny.

Representative of the tales treating of divine reward and retribution are "Humu Ban" 胡母班,<sup>13</sup> "Ding Shi Fu" 丁氏婦 (Ding's Wife),<sup>14</sup> "Zhang Pu" 張璞,<sup>15</sup> and "Liang Fu" 諒輔.<sup>16</sup>

Humu Ban<sup>17</sup> meets with a spirit on his way out, and is led to see the Lord of Mt. Tai 泰山.<sup>18</sup> The god asks him to deliver a letter to his son-in-law, who is a river deity. He does as instructed and is then rewarded by the god with a promise to exempt his ghost father from hard labour and appoint him the god of his home

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<sup>12</sup> This 20-juan text I refer to throughout this thesis is the one included in *Soushen Ji Soushen Houji Yi Zhu* 搜神記搜神後記譯注 (*In Search of Spirits and A Sequel to In Search of Spirits: An Annotated Edition*) published by Jilin Wenyi Chubanshe 吉林文藝出版社 in 1997 with Liu Qi 劉琦 and Liang Guofu 梁國輔 as annotators. This edition is primarily based on the Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局 20-juan text of SSJ and 10-juan text of *Soushen Houji*, both of which were edited and annotated by the late scholar Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Juan 293 of TPGJ.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Juan 292 of TPGJ.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Juan 292 of TPGJ.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 418.

<sup>17</sup> Humu Ban 胡母班 was a real figure in history, and as recorded in *Sanguo Zhi*, 三國志 (History of the Three Kingdoms), he lived towards the end of the Eastern Han dynasty and served as a "Holder of a Gold-coated Club" (*zhi jin wu* 執金吾) at Dong Zhuo's 董卓 court. He was later killed by Yuan Shao 袁紹, a warlord at war with Dong Zhuo during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280).

<sup>18</sup> Mt. Tai is believed to be the final settling place for spirits of the dead, and Lord of Mt. Tai, a grandson of the Heavenly Emperor, is the highest ruler of the world of the dead in the Daoist cosmology.

village. Within two years after his return from Mt. Tai, however, Humu Ban sees to his horror his sons die one after another mysteriously. He leaves home again for the mountain to seek the god's help. The Lord of Mt. Tai summons in his ghost father, who admits that he has brought his grandsons to the netherworld to keep him company. The ghost is immediately removed from the position of village god as a punishment for his abusing his power and causing the tragedy to his son's family, and the dead children are sent back to the living world.

Although adapted from brief accounts in *Lieyi Ji* about Humu Ban<sup>19</sup> and Cai Zhi 蔡支,<sup>20</sup> the SSJ version of "Humu Ban" does not come to an end when the reward is offered and accepted, as shown in *Lieyi Ji*. Instead, Gan Bao adds an episode of punishment for wrong-doings. Ironically, the villain who is punished turns out to be none other than the ghost father, who is also a beneficiary of the reward granted to the hero by the god. The rise and fall of the ghost father highlights the moral lesson of reward for doing good and punishment for doing evil, and also increases the dramatic effect of this story.

In "Humu Ban", reward and punishment is performed by a powerful god in charge of the ghost world, but in "Ding Shi Fu" they are applied by a ghost of an ordinary woman. In this story, the eponymous heroine hangs herself because she cannot endure tortures from her mother-in-law. After her tragic death, the soul of Ding's wife does not follow her dead body, but instead turns into a ghost, and takes every opportunity to make its power felt. The ghost takes on a material form identical to Ding's wife. One day, followed by two maidservants, the ghost arrives at a river, intending to make a ferry crossing to visit Ding's wife's hometown. When she asks two young boatmen to ferry her across, they each reply that they will do so only in exchange for her hand in marriage. In anger, the ghost has them drowned. An old boatman then kindly makes room for her in his boat and gets her across the river. In return for his kindness, the ghost generously rewards him with a boatful of fish.

Ding's wife is the central figure in this story. When alive, she is weak in every sense, and eventually commits suicide. In sharp contrast, the ghost of Ding's wife turns out to be extremely strong in will and character. The tragic death of Ding's wife

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 697 of TPYL.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 375 of TPGJ.

is a reflection of the cruel reality of the time, when women hardly had any rights and places to complain about their sufferings. Death became the only way of escaping from the endless tortures imposed on many of them. Since there was no hope in this life, they placed hope in the after-life, where with the chains on their mind and body broken, they could move and act with freedom as the ghost of Ding's wife does.

In contrast with the above two stories, which put emphasis on admonishing people not to do evil, the following two, "Liang Fu", and "Zhang Pu", focus on exhorting people to do good. In the first story, Liang Fu, being a virtuous official, offers himself as a sacrifice in praying for rain. His self-sacrificing spirit moves gods and spirits, and a heavy rainfall is brought down to the scorched land, putting an end to a drought.

Like Liang Fu, Zhang Pu is also a mighty virtuous imperial official, who sacrifices his own daughter to save people when danger threatens. On their way home from the capital city, he and his household arrive at the foot of a mountain, where there stands a temple devoted to the mountain god. They drop in at the temple to pay respect to the god. While pointing at an idol in the temple, a maidservant makes a joke with Zhang's daughter by proposing a marriage between his daughter and the idol. None of them take the joke to heart until that night when Zhang's wife dreams of a god thanking her for making such a proposal. Panic-stricken, they leave the place in a hurry. While crossing a lake, they find to their horror their boat stuck dead in the middle of a lake and the whole household taken hostage by the temple god. At this critical moment, Zhang Pu's wife gives up her niece to the god by pushing her into the water. Ashamed at the selfishness of his wife, Zhang Pu flings his own daughter overboard. After the girl sinks into the water, the boat begins to move. Moved by his righteous action, the god has the two girls sent back to Zhang Pu, alive and well.

Although those tales of divine reward and retribution are related in a fantastic way, they possess a distinctive social content and a fair amount of realism. In fact, they are but projections of this world. As a reflection of the reality, there are good gods and ghosts in the supernatural world, on whom are rested the hopes and ideals of humans, and there are also vile ones, who represent the ugliness of the evil forces in the world of the living. In religion and superstition, ghosts and other supernatural

beings are believed to belong to and live in different worlds. However, with the boundary lines between them broken in *zhiguai* literature, they are brought into direct contact with each other. The relationship of mortals with *shenxian* 神仙 (gods and immortals) who come from above is usually harmonious, but their relationship with *guiguai* 鬼怪 (ghosts and spirits) is far from being that. In ancient China, ghosts and (animal) spirits were considered to be inferior to human beings because they came from underneath, dark places such as graves or caves. Ancient Chinese believed that human life was simply the combination of *hun* 魂 (soul) and *po* 魄 (spirit), which were respectively controlled by the *yang* 陽 energy and *yin* 陰 energy, the two most fundamental cosmological elements. The *yang* element came from above, while the *yin* element from below. Death therefore meant to ancient Chinese the departure of *hun* and *po* from human body and return to where they had come from. After one's death, his/her *hun* rose up to Heaven while *po* sank down to earth into ghostdom.<sup>21</sup> This inferiority of *po* in relation to *hun* ensures that ghosts usually end up defeated or killed in their fight with gods and men.<sup>22</sup>

In *zhiguai* literature, spirits usually appear in human form, as do ghosts. As noted in the "Ding Gui" 訂鬼 chapter (On Ghosts) of *Lun Heng*, ancient Chinese believed that all creatures of a great age became spirits that could take on human shape.<sup>23</sup> The fox, in particular, was believed to be adept at transformation, sometimes appearing in the form of a ferocious-looking goblin or monster, and sometimes in the form of a good-looking man or woman. Most representative of tales dealing with the conflict of men with transmogrified fox spirits in SSJ are "Song Daxian" 宋大賢,<sup>24</sup> and "Wuxing Lao Li" 吳興老狸 (An Old Fox of Wuxing)<sup>25</sup>. The hero in the first story is Song Daxian, a man of integrity and courage, who risks his life by staying in a haunted pavilion. Confronting an evil-looking ghost, he shows no signs of fear. When the ghost invites him to fight, without any hesitation he takes up the challenge, and kills the ghost, which turns out to be an old fox.

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<sup>21</sup> Ye Shuxian (2002: 241-242).

<sup>22</sup> Avenging ghosts seem to make an exception in *zhiguai* literature as shown in "Ding Shi Fu", where revengeful actions against men are justified on the grounds that they have been wronged in their previous life.

<sup>23</sup> Wang Chong (1954: 220).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 447 of TPGJ.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 442 of TPGJ.

Unlike the fox in "Song Daxian", which transforms into a ferocious, rebarbative ghost, the old fox of Wuxing takes on a human form. After tricking two young men into killing their father, the fox assumes the father's appearance and settles down in his home as father and husband. Later, a Daoist priest drops in and forces the spirit to reveal its true features. Although the two young men kill the fox, they can never forgive themselves for having put their father to death and their mother to shame. Within one year, they both die of regret and sorrow.

An earlier account of a ghost/fox spirit playing such a sly trick is found in the "Yisi" 疑似 (Be Doubtful) section, "Shenxing" 慎行 (Be Cautious in Conduct) chapter of *Lǚ Shi Chunqiu*, where "an extraordinary ghost from Lique" (*Lique qi gui* 黎丘奇鬼) is recorded as assuming the face of a son to anger his father and tricks the father into killing his son.<sup>26</sup> When we compare these two items, we find in "Wuxing Laoli" a much more literary text of the story with delicate descriptions of characters and consciously built-up conflicts and crisis than in "Lique Qi Gui", which is told in a rather simple and down-to-earth way, and to admonish rather than to amuse people.

Most of the *zhiguai* tales about conflicts between human beings and other beings have men acting as protagonists. The story "Li Ji" 李季 in *Juan* 19 of SSJ is, however, an exception.<sup>27</sup> The legend has it that a serpent appears in dreams of local people, demanding virgins as sacrifice. This gigantic monster is so powerful that the local authorities cannot but sacrifice girls to satisfy its demand. Li Ji, the youngest daughter of Li Tan, offers herself as sacrifice and starts off for the temple dedicated to the serpent. She tricks the monsters into sticking its head out of its cave, and kills it with the help of a dog. When she returns to her home village, she is hailed as a heroine, and is later made queen by the king for her bravery and wisdom.

Tales dealing with love/marriage between men and ghosts can be traced back to the Han and Wei dynasties.<sup>28</sup> Gan Bao inherited this tradition and developed it to a more subtle and sophisticated level. In SSJ, relationships between human beings and supernatural beings go beyond those of men with ghosts to include relationships of men with goddesses and women with animals of human nature. "Dong Yong" 董永

<sup>26</sup> See Vol. 065 of GJCS, pp. 397-398. "Lique Qi Gui" is believed to be the earliest tale extant about ghosts in history of Chinese *zhiguai* literature.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Vol. Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 461-462.

<sup>28</sup> Representative tales of this type produced during this period of time are "Jiang Fei" 江妃 (River Goddesses) from *Liexian Zhuan* and "Tan Sheng" 談生 (Scholar Tan) from *Lieyi Ji*.



(Dong Yong)<sup>29</sup> is one of the most well-known and popular folk tales of this type included in SSJ. Dong Yong is a filial son born of a poor family. After the death of his father, he sells himself into slavery to pay for a funeral for his father. Moved by his filial piety, the Heavenly Emperor sends down a goddess to be his wife and help him pay off his debts.<sup>30</sup>

Besides "Dong Yong", other good examples of this type of stories in SSJ are "Panhu" 盤瓠<sup>31</sup> and "Nü Hua Can" 女化蠶 (From Woman into Silkworm),<sup>32</sup> both of which deal with the union of women with animals. Pan Hu is a dog, transformed from a worm, and kept in the royal palace of Emperor Gao Xin 高辛.<sup>33</sup> Faced with frequent barbarian attacks on the northern frontiers, the emperor offers his daughter as a reward to whoever gets him the head of the barbarian chieftain. Unexpectedly, the dog gets the head of the national enemy and is thus rewarded with the princess as wife. The dog takes the princess out of the palace to a remote mountain, where they live happily as husband and wife and have a lot of children. An earlier record of this legendary story of Pan Hu was made in an annotation by Guo Pu to SHJ, and was later included by Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445) as part of "Nanman Zhuan" 南蠻傳 (Stories of Southern Barbarians) in *Juan* 86 of *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han Dynasty).<sup>34</sup>

In "Nü Hua Can", a girl makes a joke with a horse, saying that she will marry the horse if it brings back her father, who is away from home on business. Taking the joke seriously, the horse starts off in search of her father at once and brings him home soon. The girl, however, has not the slightest intention of keeping her promise, which makes the horse very angry. The father, bemused to find the horse always behaving in an uncontrollable way in his daughter's presence, asks her for an explanation. The girl tells him about the joke she made with the horse. For fear that his daughter herself would become the joke of the neighbourhood, the man kills the

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 59 of TPGJ.

<sup>30</sup> Dong Yong has now become a household name in China since 1950s, when this story was adapted into a *Huangmei* opera 黃梅戲 entitled "Tianxian Pei" 天仙配 (Marriage with a Heavenly Goddess).

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 370-371).

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 434, this story is believed to be adapted from a myth included in "Haiwai Beijing" 海外北經 chapter of SHJ. For this myth in SHJ, and Yuan Ke's comments on the relationship between this myth and Gan Bao's story of "Nü Hua Can", see Yuan Ke (1980: 242-243).

<sup>33</sup> Also known as Diku, the great grandson of Huangdi, as recorded by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (?145-?85BC) in *Juan* 13 of the *Shi Ji* 史記 (Historical Records).

<sup>34</sup> For the record of Panhu in the *Hou Han Shu*, see Vols. 393 of GJCS, pp. 3125-3126..



horse in secret, flays it and hangs its hide in the courtyard. Days later, when the girl is playing in the courtyard, the hide of the horse suddenly springs up and carries her away from home. When people find them, they have been changed into a silkworm clinging to a mulberry tree and spinning cocoons. Legend has it that this was the origin of the silkworm-breeding industry.

Tales in SSJ about people rising up against tyranny include “Han Ping Qi” 韓憑妻 (Han Ping’s Wife),<sup>35</sup> and “San Wang Mu” 三王墓 (The Tomb of Three Kings).<sup>36</sup> Han Ping, a minor official in the court of King Kang, has a beautiful wife. Coveting her for her beauty, the king takes away Han Ping’s wife and throws Han Ping into prison. In despair and shame, Han Ping kills himself. Following the death of her husband, the woman jumps from a tower and dies instantly, leaving wishes in her last will to be buried together with her husband. In anger, the king has them buried in different graves. Incredibly, a big tree grows out of each grave and links the two tombs with their roots twisted underground and their twigs entwined above. Under the green shade of the miraculously growing trees, her wish for a reunion with her husband underground comes true. The emotion-laden plants contrast sharply with the avaricious and cold-blooded king.<sup>37</sup>

While Han Ping and his wife commit suicide in protest against tyranny, the hero in “San Wang Mu” chooses to rise against tyranny by taking revenge on the tyrant himself at the cost of his own life. The earliest record of this legend, also known by the title of “Moye Jian” 莫邪劍 (The Moye Sword), is found in *Juan* 4 of Zhao Ye’s *Wu Yue Chunqiu*.<sup>38</sup> Later, this legendary story was incorporated in different versions in *Lieyi Ji*,<sup>39</sup> and *Shiyi Ji* 拾遺記 (Forgotten Tales) by Wang Jia 王嘉 (?-390AD?),<sup>40</sup> and adapted by Lu Xun into a short story entitled “Zhu Jian” 鑄劍 (Forging Swords) in *Gushi Xinbian* 故事新編 (Old Tales Retold).

The legend has it that Gangjiang Moye, a famous sword-maker in the kingdom of Chu, is ordered to forge swords for the king. He makes a pair of swords, one male and the other female. Leaving the male sword at home, the sword-maker presents the

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 422.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 417.

<sup>37</sup> For an evidential study of this story, see Wang Guoliang (1980: 132-136).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Vol. 248 of GJCS, pp.15-16. See Zhao Ye at Note 71 of Chapter One.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 343 of TPYL.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 362-363.

female one to the king of Chu, who kills Moye with the sword in great rage when he discovers that the sword-maker has brought to him only the female one. Chibi, the sword-maker's son, flees when he finds out that the king has sent men to arrest him. On the way, Chibi meets a man who promises to avenge his father if Chibi will give him his own head and his sword. Without any hesitation, Chibi chops off his own head and presents it together with the sword to the stranger. The man then starts off on a journey to the capital city. The king of Chu is very pleased to see the child's head. The man asks to bring in a seething cauldron to boil Chibi's head in, and then invites the king to have a look at the head boiled in the cauldron. Seizing a chance, he draws the male sword and cuts off the king's head. Seeing the king's head falling into the cauldron, he beheads himself by the cauldron. The flesh immediately comes off the three heads and melts away in the boiling water. Since no one can distinguish the king's head from the other two heads, the three heads cannot but be buried together in one tomb, and so it is known as the "Tomb of Three Kings".

- Other Versions of SSJ

Apart from the 20-juan text of SSJ, there are three other extant versions of SSJ, the Baihai 裨海 text in 8 juan, the Dunhuang 敦煌 text in one juan, and the Xu Daozang 續道藏 text in 6 juan. The 6-juan text is included in Volume 60 of the Ming Daoist canon known as *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 (The Daoist Canon Compiled under the Zhengtong 正統 Emperor of the Ming, hereafter ZTDZ), in which there is an undated and unsigned preface attached, claiming Gan Bao as the author.<sup>41</sup> Upon further investigation, it turns out that not a single item in the 6-juan text is quoted in any *leishu* whatsoever in traditional China, or found to correspond with any item in any other extant versions of SSJ. What is more, the opening section is devoted to an introduction, first of the origins of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and then of the hierarchical system of the Daoist deities and immortals, and thus the text betrays itself as bearing no relationship to Gan Bao's SSJ.

The SSJ in 8 juan first appeared during the Wanli 萬曆 period (1573-1619) of the Ming Dynasty. This text, recompiled by Shang Jun 商濬, was published in the

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<sup>41</sup> See Vol. 60 of ZTDZ, pp. 0211-0212.

Baihai series, and later was quoted in *leishu* such as *Guang Hanwei Congshu* 廣漢魏叢書 (A Comprehensive Collection of Han-Wei Collectanea), *Zengding Hanwei Congshu* 增訂漢魏叢書 (Works Added to Han-Wei Collectanea), and *Shuo Ku* 說庫 (A Treasury of Tales). All of them attribute the authorship of this 8-juan SSJ in Baihai series to Gan Bao. On the authorship and dating of this text, there has been much research in the past few decades and an agreement seems to have emerged among SSJ scholars: this 8-juan text of SSJ was compiled at a time no earlier than the late Six Dynasties by a scholar under the assumed name of Gan Bao, probably as a sequel to Gan Bao's work.<sup>42</sup>

Of the forty items contained in the 8-juan text,<sup>43</sup> only twelve are included in the 20-juan text. A comparative study of these two texts shows that when taken as a whole, the items in the 8-juan text are more complete and more sophisticated in narration than those in the 20-juan text. Besides the differences in style and structure, tales in the 8-juan text concentrate more on themes of rising from the dead and the prolongation of life. Famous stories of this type from this text are "Guan Lu" 管輅<sup>44</sup> and "Wang Zizhen" 王子珍.<sup>45</sup> The first story tells how Zhao Yan, a teenager who is predetermined by the Southern Dipper to die before reaching adulthood, has his life prolonged by the Northern Dipper through Guan Lu, a master of magic arts.<sup>46</sup>

In "Wang Zizhen", an old man is brought back to life from the brink of death with the help of a ghost named Li Xuanshi. Unlike the Southern Dipper who appears

<sup>42</sup> Campany (1996: 60) thinks that "this text originated in the late Six Dynasties or early Tang and some of its items represent later reworkings of some of Gan Bao's original material into more elaborate narrative form"; DeWoskin (1974: 168) suggests that "it may have even been circulated under a different name between the early 7<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries"; Kosugi Ichio 小杉一雄 (1941) is quoted in DeWoskin (1974:64) as saying in his "Soshinki hihan" 搜神記批判 (A Critical Study of SSJ) that "the earliest the text could have been written was 547AD, following Yang Xuanzi's trip to Luoyang, because it includes events based on that journey as described in the *Luoyang Qielan Ji* 洛陽伽藍記" Fan Ning (1964: 88-96) and Cheng Yizhong 程毅中 (1981:23) attribute its origin to a time later than the Five Dynasties (907-960), Yuan Ke (1988: 244) ascribes its authorship to a Tang writer under the assumed name of Gan Bao, Li Jifen 李繼芬 and Han Haiming 韓海明 (1988: 157) dates it later than the Song dynasty, and Ding Xigen (1996:49) holds the work to be a Ming counterfeit.

<sup>43</sup> The 8-juan text of SSJ is included in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997). It is this version I refer to throughout this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 730-731).

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 750-753). A slightly different version of this story appears in the Dunhuang text of SSJ extant in one *juan*, and is quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 954-957).

<sup>46</sup> Guan Lu was a real historical figure, who lived during the Wei (220-265AD). Three different accounts of his life are given respectively in *Juan* 76, 216 and 447 of TPGJ.

arrogant and indifferent towards human life and death, Li Xuanshi shows great concern for the welfare of his friend, Wang Zizhen. When Zizhen encounters difficulties in his study, he offers help after class; when Zizhen's father falls ill, the ghost informs Zizhen of the cause; when the old man's life is in great danger, the ghost comes to his rescue at the risk of offending the Lord of Hell. In Li Xuanshi is embodied a human ghost of courage and intelligence. Such an image of ghosts as Li Xuanshi is a rarity in *zhiguai* literature.

In this 8-*juan* text of SSJ, the best known of the tales which deal with rising from the dead is "Wang Daoping" 王道平.<sup>47</sup> Wang Daoping, a native of Chang'an, falls in love with a girl named Fuyu and they swear to be husband and wife when they grow up. Unexpectedly Wang is conscripted into the army. Nine years later, he returns from military service only to be told that Fuyu died after a forced marriage. At the sight of her grave, he cannot but burst into tears. Deeply affected, the soul of Fuyu comes out of the grave, and asks him to open the coffin. When the coffin is opened, he finds the dead girl rising to life. He carries her home, and marries her after getting the permission of the emperor.

A much simpler version of this story appears in *Juan* 15 of the 20-*juan* text of SSJ, followed by "Hejian Nüzi" 河間女子 (A Girl of Hejian), a story much similar to "Wang Daoping" in content.<sup>48</sup> When compared, the Baihai version of "Wang Daoping" displays a minute description of the young man's uncontrollable burst of wailing in front of the grave of his beloved girl, and a skilful use of dialogues and monologues to present the inner world of the characters, which are generally lacking in the above-mentioned two items in the 20-*juan* text of SSJ. It is quite possible that "Wang Daoping" in the 8-*juan* text of SSJ is a rewrite of earlier accounts given by Gan Bao in his SSJ.

The Dunhuang text of SSJ extant in one *juan*<sup>49</sup> is reconstructed from at least five manuscripts found in the late nineteenth century at Dunhuang 敦煌 in present-day Gansu Province with some giving Ju Daoxing 句道興 as the author.<sup>50</sup> A close look

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 764-765).

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 392-393; 394).

<sup>49</sup> This one-*juan* text is included in Vol. 2 of *Dunhuang Bianwen Ji* 敦煌變文集 (Collected Transformation Texts from Dunhuang), and also in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 888-995). It is the 1997 version that I refer to in this chapter when discussing a particular item in it.

<sup>50</sup> See Campany (1996: 60-61)

shows that this text overlaps considerably with the other two texts, especially with the 8-juan text. Of the 35 items included in this text, 15 are found related to the Baihai edition, but only three items are attributable to the 20-juan text. There is no evidence substantial enough to help us trace back to the origin of this text. Judging by the style and theme, however, it might be safe to say that it was a product dating from during, or shortly after, the Tang Dynasty.

About Ju Daoxing nothing is known except that he must have been exposed to both Confucian and Buddhist influences. A striking feature about this text is that it is even more heavily Buddhist and Confucian in its choice of themes, since the stories deal with nothing but "xingxiao" 行孝 (filial conduct) and "Yinguo Baoying" 因果報應 (karmic retribution). As evidenced by the *juan* title, "Xingxiao Diyi" 行孝第一 (Filial Piety First), the author gives priority to the importance of filial respect and responsibility. Running parallel to this theme is karmic retribution. More than eighty percent of this text, that is, 29 out of the 35 items, is given up to accounts of the practice of filial piety, and the receipt of rewards/punishments in return.

Take for example the first three stories in this text, "Fan Liao" 樊寮,<sup>51</sup> "Zhang Song" 張嵩,<sup>52</sup> and "Jiao Hua" 焦華.<sup>53</sup> Except for differences in settings and characters, there is a striking resemblance between them in plot and theme—all telling of a devoted son seeking a life-saving rarity for his dying mother/father at the risk of his own life. When we compare them with "Wang Xiang" 王祥,<sup>54</sup> "Wang Yan" 王延,<sup>55</sup> and "Fan Liao" 樊僚<sup>56</sup> in *Juan* 11 of the 20-juan text, we find these three tales are nothing but old wine in new bottles.

Although this text is primarily didactic, full of Buddhist and Confucian teachings, there are still some items worth our attention, especially those with a strong folkloristic flavour as shown in "Tian Kunlun" 田昆侖.<sup>57</sup> Like Dong Yong, Tian Kunlun is too poor to get married. One day on his way to the fields, he finds three beautiful goddesses bathing in a pond. He takes away the clothes of the

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 888).

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 890-891).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 893--894).

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 300).

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 301).

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 302).

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 965-969).



youngest in secret. Without her clothes, the goddess cannot join her two elder sisters flying back to Heaven. Tian then takes her home and makes her his wife. Years later, Tian is conscripted into the army and sent to the frontiers, leaving at home his son, Tian Zhang, in his wife's care. Suffering from homesickness, the goddess seizes the chance to get back her clothes and fly away in them. Later, with the help of her sisters, the goddess brings her son Tian Zhang to Heaven to live with her. Through years of studying under his heavenly grandfather, Tian Zhang becomes a man of great learning. He is then sent down to the world of mortals and is made Prime Minister. However, he is soon removed from this post for committing trivial offences. As luck would have it, Tian Zhang is rehabilitated after identifying two mysterious objects for the emperor, and giving satisfactory answers to a series of difficult questions posed by the emperor.

Stories of a man getting a goddess or a fairy as his wife by stealing her clothing and formulaic questions and answers between a hero and his benefactor are a popular type of traditional Chinese folktales and have had a long history of circulation. The earliest record of Tian Zhang answering difficult question appears in *juan 2* of *Hanjin Xichui Mujian Huibian* 漢晉西陲木簡匯編 (A Collected Edition of the Han and Jin Wood Tablets Excavated on the Western Frontiers).<sup>58</sup> An earlier version of this folk tale which is conventionally called “Maoyi Nü” 毛衣女 (Girls in Feathered Clothing)<sup>59</sup> has the goddess as the central figure with the first half devoted to her forced marriage with a man after he steals her feathered clothes, and the second half to her flight back to heaven after she gets back her feathered clothes. According to this version, the goddess has three daughters by the man but no sons. It is likely that at that time stories of Tian Zhang answering questions existed independently from stories about girls in feathered clothing and that they were later put together into a single story as we have seen in “Tian Kunlun”.

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Ouyang Jiang (1997: 296-297). For more about the origin of this story, see Yuan Ke (1988: 247-248).

<sup>59</sup> Quoted under the title of “Xinyu Nanzi” 新喻男子 (A Man from Xinyu County) in *juan 463* of TPGJ with SSJ given as the source book, and included in *Juan 14* of the 20-*juan* text of SSJ. For a detailed discussion of the folklore origin of the story about girls in feathered clothing, see Li Daohe's 李道和 “Nü Niao Gushi de Mingsu Wenhua Yuanyuan” 女鳥故事的民俗文化淵源 (The Folklore Origin of the Story of Female Birds), in *Wenxue Yichan* 文學遺產 (Literary Heritage), No.4/2000.



There is no denying that the Dunhuang text overlaps with the other two texts. Is this text simply a forgery? Or is it a revised edition of the original text of SSJ or the Baihai edition? Our answer to these two questions is basically negative. It does not necessarily follow from the textual overlap that Ju Daoxing copied SSJ from Gan Bao or from Shang Jun. Instead, there exists a chance that when recompiling Gan Bao's SSJ, the later redactor(s) quoted by mistake items from Ju Daoxing's version of SSJ.

When we discuss the relationship between these three texts, we cannot ignore the fact that in traditional China, it was a common practice to name one's work after an earlier one of the same type, and attribute one's work to a great name of previous dynasties. It is very possible that the three texts of SSJ were originally texts somewhat independent from each other and were brought into a kind of connection by later hands through reconstruction and recompilation.<sup>60</sup>

## Section 2: Other major *zhiguai* works of the Six Dynasties

- Cao Pi (?) and *Lieyi Ji*

*Lieyi Ji*, alternately entitled *Lieyi Zhuan* 列異傳, is the first important *zhiguai* work in the history of classical Chinese supernatural fiction. Part of this book is quoted in the *Shui Jing Zhu* and in the commentary made by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372-451) to Chen Shou's 陳壽 (233-297) *Sanguo Zhi*, but there is no mention in the commentary of its authorship. It was not until the Tang dynasty when Wei Zheng and Changsun Wuji were put in charge of compiling *Sui Shu* that this work was first officially listed as consisting of three *juan* in the *Zazhuan* section of SSJJZ, which ascribes the authorship to Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226), Emperor Wen of the Wei dynasty 魏文帝.<sup>61</sup> A record of this work with Cao Pi given as the author is also found in *Juan* 158 of *Beitang Shuchao* 北堂書鈔 (Books and Documents from the Northern Hall, hereafter BTSC) by Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558-638).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> It is out of this consideration that these three texts are treated as different from each other for morphological analysis in Chapter Seven of this paper.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 53.

<sup>62</sup> See Yu Shinan (1966: 385).

*Lieyi Ji* was later listed as being composed of only one *juan* in TSJJZ<sup>63</sup> and TSYWZ,<sup>64</sup> which, however, attribute the book to Zhang Hua, the author of *Bowu Zhi*. The Qing scholar Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 came up with a compromising theory about the authorship in his *Sui Shu Jingji Zhi Kaozheng* 隋書經籍志考證 (An Evidential Study of SSJJZ). According to him, “Zhang Hua wrote a sequel to Cao Pi’s *Lieyi Ji*, and then these two books were combined together by later hands”(Zhang Hua xu Wendi zhi shu er houren he zhi 張華續文帝之書而後人合之).<sup>65</sup>

While collecting ancient fiction for his GXSGC,<sup>66</sup> Lu Xun (1981: 43) found that in some items attributed to *Lieyi Ji* mentions there were mentions of the periods of Zhengshi 正始 (241-248) and Ganlu 甘露 (256-260), and that part of this work was quoted in the literature of the Southern and Northern Dynasties 南北朝 (420-589). Based on his findings, Lu Xun (1981: 43) suggested that either these items were subsequent interpolations or the book was written by a later scholar of the Wei or Jin dynasty, who assumed the name of Emperor Wen of the Wei dynasty.<sup>67</sup>

*Lieyi Ji* is a book devoted to “accounts of ghosts and strange occurrences” (*xu guiwu qiguai zhi shi* 序鬼物奇怪之事) as described in a brief explanatory postscript to the *Zazhuan* section of SSJJZ.<sup>68</sup> By the subject matter, the ghost stories in *Lieyi Ji* might be divided into three types:

- (1). Resurrection,
- (2). Conflict between men and ghosts/spirits, and
- (3). Romantic encounter/union of men with ghosts/spirits.

<sup>63</sup> For the entry of *Lieyi Ji* in *Juan* 46 of TSJJZ, see Liu Xu (1975: 2005).

<sup>64</sup> For the entry of *Lieyi Ji* in TSYWZ, see Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Ouyang Jian (1997: 63). For Yao’s “Kaozheng”, see Vol. 915/916 *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (A Sequel to *Siku Quanshu*, hereafter XXSKQS). Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1995.

<sup>66</sup> Lu Xun (1938) collects fifty items from BTSC, YWLJ, TPYL, TPGJ, FYZL, etc. into his GXSGC, all listed with *Lieyi Ji* as the source book.

<sup>67</sup> For more details about the authorship of this work, see Li Jianguo (1984), Miao Zhuang 苗壯 (1998), Wang Guoliang (1988), Ouyang Jian (1997), and Lin Chen (1998). Li Jianguo (1984: 245-246), and Miao Zhuang (1998: 61-62) ascribe the authorship to Cao Pi, as do Wang Guoliang (1988: 45-50), and Ouyang Jian (1997: 63-64) albeit with reservations; Lin Chen (1998: 121) agrees with Yao Zhenzong, suggesting the existence of another *Lieyi Ji* produced later than Cao Pi’s.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 55.

As mentioned previously, it was a common belief among ancient Chinese people that *hun* and *po* were incarcerated in human bodies and that once one died, the *hun* would leave the dead body and the *po* sink with the body down to earth, and become a ghost. Accordingly, the resurrection of the dead would be possible so long as the *hun* was summoned by some supernatural power to return to and become reunited with the *po* in the dead body.<sup>69</sup> Accounts of the rise of the dead were thus of realistic significance to the Six Dynasties' readers and writers alike.

"Cai Zhi" from *Lieyi Ji*<sup>70</sup> is one of the earliest tales about resurrection from the dead in the history of Chinese *zhiguai* literature. Cai Zhi is an official messenger, who, losing his way one day, ends up being brought into the presence of the Lord of Mt. Tai, a god in charge of the spirits of the dead. The god asks Cai Zhi to send a letter to the Heavenly Emperor, his grandfather. In gratitude for his deliverance of the letter, the Heavenly Emperor raises Cai Zhi's wife from the dead.

The second type of tales found in *Lieyi Ji* is about the conflict between men and supernatural beings, mostly ghosts and spirits. A good example is "Chu Wang Ying Nü" 楚王英女 (A Daughter of King Ying of the State of Chu).<sup>71</sup> The story has it that the king of Chu has a daughter, who is possessed and bewitched. The king appeals to the nation for help. Lu Shaoqian, a virtuous man good at subduing demons and spirits, answers the king's call. On his way to the capital city, Lu Shaoqian meets a spirit in human shape, who bribes Lu, trying to dissuade him from rescuing the princess. Lu sees through the trick and continues his journey by taking another way. A fight then takes place. By exercising his magic power, Lu kills the spirit, which turns out to be a serpent, and thus saves the princess.

However, ghosts and spirits are not always dreadful and vicious in *zhiguai* literature. On the contrary, some ghosts are described as weak in strength and feeble in mind, as is shown in the story "Zong Dingbo" 宗定伯 from *Lieyi Ji*.<sup>72</sup> Zong Dingbo is a man of courage and intelligence. One night, after running into a ghost, he pretends to be a ghost himself, and succeeds in tricking the real ghost into revealing

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<sup>69</sup> For a detailed study of the relationship between human body and soul in ancient Chinese beliefs, see Wang Xiaodun 王曉盾 (1989: 129-144).

<sup>70</sup> See "Cai Zhi" at Note 19 of this chapter.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 456 of TPGJ.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 321 of TPGJ.

its Achilles' heel. The story ends with the real ghost transformed into a goat and sold by Zong Dingbo at market.

The attitude of the Chinese in antiquity towards ghosts and spirits is, in fact, a mixture of fear, contempt, and sometimes sympathy. As is the case with "Chu Wang Ying Nü" and "Zong Dingbo", ghosts are described either as malicious with ugly features and vile intentions, to be slaughtered by force, or as gullible and weak-minded, to be outwitted by trickery. Elsewhere, however, they are treated much like us, and have human feelings and features. There seems to have long been a lingering suspicion that ghosts and spirits are inferior to living beings and a belief that they long to return to life again, to live and love as they did in their previous life.

"Tan Sheng" from *Lieyi Ji*<sup>73</sup> is the most influential *zhiguai* tales of the time dealing with love and marriage between ghosts and men. The ghost in this story is the dead daughter of Prince of Suiyang. One night the ghost appears as a beautiful girl of about sixteen and offers to marry Tan but on the condition that he must not look at her body by torchlight for three years. Tan agrees to this condition, and they then get married and have a son about one year later. Towards the end of the three-year period, Tan, tempted by his friends and driven by his own curiosity, steals a look at his wife by torchlight only to find her nothing but dry bones from the waist down. His rash action makes it impossible for the ghost to return to life again, thus causing endless regret to both Tan and his ghost wife.

- Tao Qian (?) and *Xu Soushen Ji*

As shown above, there has long been much controversy over the authorship of *Lieyi Ji* and SSJ. That is also the case with *Xu Soushen Ji*. Alternatively called *Soushen Houji* 搜神後記 or *Soushen Xuji* 搜神續記, *Xu Soushen Ji* is recorded as being composed of 10 *juan* in SSJJZ,<sup>74</sup> which credits the authorship to Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427),<sup>75</sup> but no mention whatsoever is made of this work in TSJJZ, TSYWZ, and *Song Shi Yiwen Zhi* 宋史藝文志 (The Catalogue Book of History of the Song

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 316 of TPGJ.

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>75</sup> Tao Qian, whose courtesy names were Yuanliang 元亮, and Yuanming 淵明, was the most prominent poet of his time.

Dynasty, hereafter SSYWZ).<sup>76</sup> An earlier record of this work as authored by Tao Qian than in SSJJZ is found in a preface to *Gao Seng Zhuan* 高僧傳 (Chronologies of Senior Monks) by Monk Huijiao 慧皎 of the Liang 梁 dynasty (502-557) during the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties.<sup>77</sup> Although this work is traditionally attributed to Tao Qian, there are some good reasons to doubt this attribution.

In the extant text, events and reign titles that postdate Tao's death are mentioned,<sup>78</sup> as noted by the Ming scholar Shen Shilong 沈士龍 in "*Soushen Ji Xu*" 搜神記序 (Preface to SSJ).<sup>79</sup> According to ZMTY, this work was probably produced during the Six Dynasties by a scholar who assumed Tao Qian's name.<sup>80</sup> Lu Xun (1981: 46) also expressed doubts about Tao Qian's authorship on the grounds that "Tao Qian was an enlightened and rational man, who probably gave little thought to deities and spirits." (*Tao Qian kuangda weibi quanquan yu guishen* 陶潛曠達未必拳拳於鬼神). Based on a systematic study of the text, the contemporary Taiwan scholar Wang Guoliang (1978: 30) denied Tao Qian the authorship, too, believing that *Xu Soushen Ji* was most probably a work under the assumed name of Tao Qian by a scholar of the Liu Song 劉宋 (420-479)<sup>81</sup> or Qi 齊 (479-502) during the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

The original text of *Xu Soushen Ji* did not survive beyond the Tang. During the Ming, a 10-juan version of this work was reconstructed from *leishu* and incorporated into such *congshu* as *Mice Huihan*, *Jindai Mishu* 津逮秘書 (Rare Books of Jindai), *Baizi Quanshu* 百子全書 (Complete Works of One Hundred Writers, hereafter BZQS), and some abridged versions of it later appeared in *Shuo Fu* 說郛 (The

<sup>76</sup> The version of SSYWZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Yu Jiayi (1974: 1137-1138).

<sup>78</sup> Tao Qian died in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Yuanjia 元嘉 period (424-454AD), but in items in *Juan* 6, and *Juan* 10 of the extant text of this work, there are references made to events which took place in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> years of the period. For these items, see Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 646; 710-711).

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996:50-51), Shen's preface was later cited in ZMTY as evidence against the ascription in SSJJZ of the authorship to Tao Qian.

<sup>80</sup> For an account in ZMTY about the dating and authorship of this work, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2946.

<sup>81</sup> The Song dynasty (420-479AD) founded by Liu Yu 劉裕 (356-422) during the Southern and Northern Dynasties is generally referred to in Chinese history as the Liu Song dynasty to be differentiated from the Song dynasty (960-1279) founded by Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (927-976), which itself is divided between the Northern Song 北宋 dynasty (960-1127) with Bianjing 汴京 as its capital and the Southern Song 南宋 dynasty (1127-1270) with Hangzhou 杭州 as the capital.



Environs of Fiction), *Wuchao Xiaoshuo* 五朝小說 (Fiction of Five Dynasties), *Zengding Hanwei Congshu*, etc.

Of the various versions of *Xu Soushen Ji*, the most complete is the Zhonghua Shuju Edition in 10 *juan* with 117 items included in the main text and 6 appendices.<sup>82</sup> Most items in this work have their origin in folk tales and legends, with the rest of them adapted from earlier *zhiguai* works like SSJ, and *Ling Gui Zhi* 靈鬼志 (Records of Spirits and Ghosts).<sup>83</sup> By the subject matter, this work can be roughly divided into two sections, with the first devoted to gods and immortals and the latter to ghosts and spirits. An outstanding feature of this work is its beautiful descriptions, including one of an immortal cave world as found in “Taohua Yuan” 桃花源 (The Peach Blossom Spring),<sup>84</sup> and its vivid accounts of human adventures into the immortal world and their romantic encounters with supernatural beings, as we will see in the story of “Shan Xian Chicheng” 剡縣赤誠 (Mt. Chicheng in Shan County).<sup>85</sup>

Yuan Xiang and Gen Shuo, hunters from Shan County, go hunting on Mt. Chicheng. While chasing a pack of goats, they find themselves led into a cave. Two beautiful goddesses of around 15 years old give them a warm welcome and the four then live together as two couples. Soon the two men feel homesick and leave secretly. The two goddesses catch up with them, and give Yuan and Gen a pouch as a souvenir, but warn them never to open it. One day after their return from the mountain, the pouch is opened when Gen Shuo is away from home, and out of it flies a little blue bird. When Gen learns of it, he can do nothing but feel regret. The next morning, he goes out to work as usual, but at noon he is found lying motionless in

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<sup>82</sup> This edition was published in 1981 with collations by Wang Shaoying. The text I hereafter refer to in this chapter when discussing a particular item is the one included in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997), which itself is a newly collated and annotated version of the 1981 edition.

<sup>83</sup> *Ling Gui Zhi* in 3 *juan* is attributed to a Jin scholar surnamed by Xun 荀. Twenty-four items are collected from *leishu* and *congshu* by Lu Xun (1938) into his GXSGC.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 547), the *Xu Soushen Ji* version of this story is slightly different in wording from “Taohua Yuan Ji” 桃花源記 (A Record of the Peach Blossom Spring) in *Juan 5* of *Tao Yuanming Ji* 陶淵明集 (Collected Works of Tao Yuanming), which is quoted in Vol. 1063 of SKQS, pp. 512-514.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Liu Qi and Liang Guofu (1997: 542-543).



the fields. When people come near to where he lies, they find nothing but an empty body like the discarded shell of a cicada.<sup>86</sup>

Like Gan Bao, the author of *Xu Soushen Ji* drew heavily on folklore. The best-known of the folktales recorded in it is “Baishui Sunü” 白水素女 (A Goddess from the Milky Way),<sup>87</sup> better known today as “Tianluo Guniang” 田螺姑娘 (A Snail Girl). The hero in this story is Xie Duan, a poor young man of great virtue, who lives alone, having been orphaned as a young child. One day on his way home, he catches sight of a big snail. He picks it up and keeps it in a water jar in his house. From this point on, every evening when he comes home from the fields, there is always a meal already prepared for him and a fire glowing in the hearth. This lasts for quite a long time, until one day when he returns home earlier than usual from the fields to find a young lady emerging from the jar to do housework. Upon inquiry, the lady reveals that she is a goddess of the Milky Way, and has been sent by the Heavenly Emperor as a reward for his righteousness to help him out of poverty. Since her identity and intention have now been exposed, she cannot stay in the mortal world any longer. Before returning to heaven, she leaves behind the shell of the snail, which will never be empty of grain. From then on, the poor young man thrives, and before long he is married and made county magistrate.

The earliest record of this folktale appears in *Fameng Ji* 發蒙記 (Records for Enlightenment) by Shu Xi 束皙 (261?-?300AD) as follows:

Xie Duan, a native of Houguan, found a big snail in the sea. Out of it came a beautiful woman, who said to Xie Duan, “I am a goddess from the Milky Way. Sympathising with you, the Heavenly Emperor sent me to be your wife to help you out of poverty.”<sup>88</sup>

Composed of only 34 Chinese characters, this version of the tale is rather thin, and seriously deficient in narrative arts, with only the bare bones given. Besides the two

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<sup>86</sup> Human bodies in Chinese superstition are conceived as the shell of the soul. The empty body Gen Shuo leaves behind implies that he has broken away from the restraints of the mortal world and risen to the immortal world free of life and death. See Wang Xiaodun at Note 69 of this Chapter.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Liu Qin and Liang Guofu (1997: 612-613).

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Lin Chen (1998: 173).

versions mentioned above, a third version of this tale is found in Ren Fang's *Shuyi Ji* as follows:

Xie Duan was a scholar from Jin'an Prefecture. By nature he was pure in mind and body and never took to dissolute music and women. One day while watching waves on the seashore, he found a snail the size of a 50-litre container. He cut it open and found in it a beautiful woman. She said, "I am a goddess from the Milky Way. The Heavenly Emperor thinks that you are a man of virtue, and instructs me to be your wife." Believing the woman to be an evil spirit, Duan rebuked her sternly. With a sigh, she rose above clouds and disappeared.<sup>89</sup>

However, this version, in which Xie Duan is described as a scholar instead of a poor farmer, is still rather thin, being neither as complete in structure nor as vivid in description of characters as the one from *Xu Soushen Ji*. During about two thousand years of development of the *zhiguai* genre from the simple sketches of the Warring States period to the more rounded and lively narratives in the celebrated LZZY of the early Qing dynasty, quite a few supernatural tales underwent periodic revision and recomposition, as we have seen in the story about the goddess from the Milky Way. More examples of this can be found in stories of adventures of men visiting the immortal world and their romantic encounters with fairies and goddesses, such as the well-known "Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao" 劉晨阮肇,<sup>90</sup> which is adapted from "Shan Xian Chicheng" from *Xu Soushen Ji*.

- Liu Yiqing and his *Youming Lu*

The story of "Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao" is attributed to *Youming Lu* by Liu Yiqing, Prince of Linchuan 臨川, who was an nephew of Liu Yu, founder of the Liu Song dynasty. This work is listed as comprising 20 *juan* in SSJJZ,<sup>91</sup> but is recorded as being composed of 30 *juan* in TSYWZ.<sup>92</sup> *Youming Lu* in the original had been lost

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<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Vol. 16 of BZQS, p. 10126.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 31 of FYZL.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

most probably by the end of the Northern Song dynasty,<sup>93</sup> and no mention is made of this work in SSYWZ. Fortunately a great many items from *Youming Lu* are preserved in *leishu* such as CXJ, FYZL, TPGJ, TPYL, etc., from which Lu Xun culls 265 items into his GXSGC.<sup>94</sup>

Liu Yiqing is better known for his *Shishuo Xinyu*, the most influential *zhiren* work of that time. Besides *Shishuo Xinyu* and *Youming Lu*, he also wrote *Xuanyan Ji* 宣驗記 (Records of Revealed Marvels) in 13 *juan*, a Buddhist miracle tale collection.<sup>95</sup> In contrast, *Youming Lu* is a *zhiguai* work with a wider choice of themes than *Xuanyan Ji*, which is concerned exclusively with promoting Buddhist doctrines. Tales in *Youming Lu* can be roughly divided into three types: historical anecdotes, social customs and folk legends, and strange and miraculous occurrences.

Possibly the most popular of tales dealing with miraculous occurrences in this work is “Mai Fen Er” 買粉兒 (The Lad Who Bought Powder).<sup>96</sup> This is a highly emotional story with a vivid account of how a young man dies for love and is later raised from the dead by love. Apart from stories of revival from the dead and encounters with immortals, there are a good few tales in *Youming Lu* about men fighting with ghosts and spirits, such as “Li Hua Ren” 狸化人 (From Wild Cat into Woman)<sup>97</sup> and “Yuhang Guang” 余杭廣 (Guang, a Native of Yuhang County).<sup>98</sup> In the story “Li Hua Ren”, a woman holding a baby in her arms seeks shelter in a hut at the top of a mountain. After she falls asleep by the fire, she is revealed to be a wild cat holding a black chicken in its claws, and is thus killed. The next day, a man comes to ask about his wife. Later, when a dog is brought into his presence, the man turns into a wild cat, too, and is killed on the spot.

“Yuhang Guang” is a story with a compound theme of men fighting with ghosts and rising from the dead. The eponymous hero, Guang proposes marriage to a girl but is rejected by her father. When the father dies, Guang comes to her house at her request for help only to find a group of ghosts playing with the dead body of the old

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<sup>93</sup> For this account, see Hong Mai's “Yijian San Zhi Xin Xu” 夷堅三志辛序 (Preface to the 8th Section of Book 3 of the *Records of Yijian*), quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 103).

<sup>94</sup> For items collected in GXSGC, see Lu Xun (1997: 143-208).

<sup>95</sup> For the entry of this work in SSJJZ, see Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 53.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 274 of TPGJ.

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 31 of FYZL.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 383 of TPGJ.

man. He rushes in and drives them all out of the house. After Guang retrieves the old man's soul and brings him back to life, he obtains approval from the old man to marry his daughter.

- Zu Chongzhi and his *Shuyi Ji*

Another influential *zhiguai* work produced during the Six Dynasties is *Shuyi Ji*. This work in 10 *juan* is listed in SSJJZ,<sup>99</sup> and in TSYWZ<sup>100</sup> as well, and both of them credit the authorship to Zu Chongzhi. However, the original text was lost during the Song dynasty, most probably some time after the compilation of TPGJ in 977. As is the case with *Youming Lu*, no record whatsoever is found of this work in SSYWZ. Fortunately, this work is also quoted in fragment in YWLJ, CXJ, TPGJ, TPYL, etc., from which Lu Xun collects 90 items into his GXSGC.<sup>101</sup>

Unlike Ren Fang's *Shuyi Ji*, which, like *Bowu Zhi*, is concerned mainly with rare and strange animals and plants, Zu's *Shuyi Ji* is almost exclusively devoted to accounts of gods, ghosts, and spirits. A striking feature about the supernatural beings described in this collection is that they are usually good at or subject to transformation, as shown in tales like "Fuyang Ren" 富陽人 (A Native of Fuyang County)<sup>102</sup> and "Huang Miao" 黃苗.<sup>103</sup>

The story "Fuyang Ren" tells of a mountain elf, who, after changing into a cudgel, steals into a crab-catching basket only to end up burned to death by the crab-catcher. Unlike the mountain elf in this story, Huang Miao is neither a spirit nor a ghost but a man, who is transformed into a man-eating monster by a temple god as a punishment for failure to keep his promise to offer sacrifice to the temple. After Huang Miao fulfils the task to eat thirty persons to atone for his sinning against the temple god, Huang Miao is set free and restored to normal human appearance.

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<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>101</sup> See Lu Xun (1997: 99-120).

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 323 of TPGJ. A similar version of this story appears in *Juan* 7 of *Xu Soushen Ji* under the title of "Shan Xiao" 山魈 (The Mountain Elf).

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 296 of TPGJ.



With Buddhism taking root during the Southern and Northern dynasties, *zhiguai* writers since then began to turn to Buddhist scriptures for inspiration and raw material. Some of them even went as far as to make up fantastic stories to propagate Buddhist doctrines. *Yuanhun Ji* is one of the most representative works of the Buddhist *zhiguai* literature produced during the Six Dynasties.<sup>104</sup>

*Yuanhun Ji* is recorded as comprising 3 *juan* in SSJZ,<sup>105</sup> and TSYWZ,<sup>106</sup> and in SSYWZ<sup>107</sup> and CWZM<sup>108</sup> under the title of *Huanyuan Zhi* 還冤志 (Records of Correcting Wrongs), all giving Yan Zhitui as the author, who is best known for his *Yan Shi Jiaxun*. The original text of *Yuanhun Ji* was lost, and preserved in FYZL are forty-one items and in TPGJ thirty-three items.

As the title implies, *Yuanhun Ji* is exclusively dedicated to tales of avenging ghosts and spirits. As recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan*, accounts of avenging ghosts can be traced back to as early as 602 BC, when Zichan 子產 (?-522B.C.), in explaining why the apparition of Boyou 伯有 kept hanging around his enemies to seek revenge after Boyou was killed in battle, maintains:

When an ordinary man or woman dies a violent death, his/her soul and spirit are still able to retain the human shape, making mischief to the living. So that a ghost of noble birth should be all the more capable of making its power felt.<sup>109</sup>

With this belief in mind, people were advised to "show your respect for ghosts and deities while keeping them at a distance"<sup>110</sup> and to appease troubled ghosts and spirits by providing them with a place for rest.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>104</sup> For a close study of the Buddhist influence of the Six Dynasties upon *zhiguai* literature, see Zhu Hengfu's 朱恆夫 (2001: 108-124).

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of CSJCJB, p. 54.

<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 55.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 83.

<sup>108</sup> Quoted in Vol. 001 of GJCS, p. 157.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in the *Zuo Zhuan*, 1973, p. 1112.

<sup>110</sup> See the *Analects* at Note 61 of Chapter One.

<sup>111</sup> Zichan is quoted in the *Zuo Zhuan* as saying: "Ghosts will not stop troubling people until they have a place for rest" (*gui you suo gui nai bu wei li* 鬼有所歸乃不為厲). For this account, see the *Zuo Zhuan*, 1973, p. 1111.

Unlike earlier accounts of avenging ghosts and spirits, tales in *Yuanhun Zhi* seems to have been compiled with the sole view of promoting the Buddhist doctrine of karmic retribution. The strong didacticism inevitably spoils the appetite of modern readers for works of this type, but there are still some items well worthy of our attention.

The most famous in this work is the story “Xu Tiejui” 徐鐵臼.<sup>112</sup> Xu Tiejui is a boy whose mother died when he was young. He is left at home uncared-for while his father is away on business. His stepmother is a cruel woman, who tries every means to torture Tiejui. Finally, the poor child dies of hunger and cold. Ten days after his death, the ghost of Xue Tiejui returns to take revenge on the stepmother and her son. The ghost keeps tormenting them in much the same way as they did Tiejui until justice is done. Although filled with superstition, transmigration of the soul, and ideas of karmic retribution, this story mirrors an ugly aspect of reality in the living world, from which the reader can feel the bitter hatred of domestic violence and social injustice.

- A brief conclusion

This chapter has outlined the historical background against which the *zhiguai* literature emerged and took shape, and also looked in detail at the major works of supernatural fiction of Six Dynasties. The great number of *zhiguai* works produced during this period of time, and the high level of narrative sophistication and plot complication attained in some of the *zhiguai* tales, were unmistakably indicative of *zhiguai* writings developing into a genre independent of historical, miscellaneous, and philosophical writings.

Although one can find in certain pieces a high degree of structural unity and consciously made-up fictional elements, plots in most cases are skimpy and scrawny, largely deficient in literary elegance, the characters flat and shadowy. The Six Dynasties *zhiguai* writers generally contented themselves with making records of marvels and miracles. Accounts of the anomalous were more often than not given in much the same fashion as historical records or anecdotal notes, with the aim of

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<sup>112</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 120 of TPGJ.



edifying the audience more than amusing them. Six Dynasties supernatural fiction, taken as a whole, is far from being a mature genre of prose narratives.

## Chapter Three: Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction of the Tang and Five Dynasties

### Section 1: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Tang dynasty

- The rise of the *chuanqi* and the continuity of the *zhiguai* tradition under the Tang

The Tang dynasty is best remembered as a golden age of poetry, but it also witnessed an unprecedented flourishing in the production of fiction. In the short span of less than three hundred years, around three hundred works of fiction were produced, and over four hundred pieces are still extant today.<sup>1</sup> In the literary expression of the Tang era, fiction is second only to poetry. Like poetry, fiction underwent radical changes in the Tang dynasty, eventually maturing after hundreds of years of development.

Before the Tang there was not much of deliberate writing of fiction in China. To the Tang writers of fiction, however, telling a story was no longer merely a matter of setting down facts, actual or supposed, concerning real or imagined persons, or simply reworking/rewriting old folk-tales and marvels without refinement. Writers became keen on fabricating stories, vivifying them with skilled use of dialogue, and embellishing them with elegant phrases and poems. Through their efforts, Tang fiction began to give up the anecdotal and historical form for a longer and more elaborate narrative style known as "*chuanqi ti*" 傳奇體 (marvel-transmitting form). An extreme example of this *chuanqi* style is the early Tang tale *You Xian Ku* 游仙窟 (A Romantic Adventure into the Fairy Cave) by Zhang Zhuo 張鷟 (658-730) which is approximately 9,000 characters in length, and is written in prosodic parallel prose with 84 poems dotted throughout the story.<sup>2</sup>

Coincident with the rise of Tang fiction of the marvellous, some new social factors emerged at this time, which contributed to the themes of Tang fiction. One such factor was the three competing religious systems during the Tang. After a

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<sup>1</sup> Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 and Hou Zhongyi 侯忠義 (1981) list nearly three hundred works of fiction produced during the Tang and Five Dynasties. Li Jianguo (1993) numerates two hundred and twenty-five works inclusive of individual compositions, with some *zhiren* works excluded from this list.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of this work, see Liu Kairong 劉開榮 (1966:123-160).

decline during the Six Dynasties, Confucianism again found strong supporters among the elite literary and gentry class. Daoism revived and developed rapidly under the patronage of the Tang royal family.<sup>3</sup> Buddhism had by the end of the Six Dynasties successfully integrated with Chinese culture and been accepted as a domestic religion.<sup>4</sup> Adherents of the three religions used the tale as a tool to promote their own claims and expose the pretensions of their rivals in their struggle for support and survival. However, the religious intentions and messages in magic tales of Tang are conveyed in a much less obtrusive way than in the earlier religious tales, and, through better characterisation and description, the Tang stories generally become more interesting and elaborate than the Six Dynasties apologues. What is more, not all the religious stories produced in the Tang era were told simply for the purpose of religious propaganda. Sometimes, Buddhist or Daoist cosmology upon which some Tang tales depend for their setting was utilised as a vehicle for social criticism.

Another factor that stimulated the production of tales in *chuanqi* style was the practice widespread from the middle of the Tang dynasty<sup>5</sup> on of candidates for the civil service examinations submitting their sample compositions to official examiners, a practice known in Chinese as *wenjuan* 溫卷, literally "warming up scrolls", or "reviewing scrolls". As noted by the Song scholar Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛 (fl.1190) in *Juan 8* of *Yunlu Manchao* 雲麓漫鈔 (Random Writings at Yunlu),<sup>6</sup> "Tang scholars first sent in their names to the chief examiner through some influential personage, and then handed in their compositions. A few days later, they would present some more. This practice was called *wenjuan*. *Youguai Lu* and

<sup>3</sup> Daoism found favour with the royal family of the Tang dynasty because the founder of Daoism, Lao Zi 老子 whose real name was Li Er 李耳, was considered to be one of their distant ancestors of the Tang royal family, as stated in "Zongshi Shixi" 宗室世系 (The Lineage of the Tang Royal Family) in *juan 70* of *Xin Tang Shu*. For a detailed discussion of the rise of Daoism under the Tang rulers, see Fu Qinjia 傅勤家 (1989).

<sup>4</sup> Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 (1988).

<sup>5</sup> For the convenience of description, the literary history of the Tang dynasty is divided into three periods: the early Tang Period (618-762) spanning nearly 150 years from Emperor Gaozu 高祖 to Emperor Suzong 肅宗; the Middle Tang Period (762-859) nearly 100 years from Emperor Daizong 代宗 to Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗; the Late Tang Period (859-907) nearly 50 years from Emperor Yizong 懿宗 to Emperor Aidi 哀帝.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Vol. 864 of SKQS, p.338. An account of this practice similar to Zhao's is found in "Han Wengong Jianshi" 韓文公荐士 (Han Yu Recommends Scholars) in *Juan 5* of *Rongzhai Sibi* 容齋四筆 (Collection Four of Writings of Rongzhai) by Hong Mai, quoted in Vol. 245 of GJCS, pp. 44-45.

*Chuanqi* are both examples of sample writings."<sup>7</sup> To demonstrate his capability for description and exposition in the hope of making a favourable impression on the examiner, the candidate would make up fantastic stories employing flamboyant language and a variety of writing techniques. Although it is now not easy to tell who wrote which stories as sample compositions, it is certain that this practice contributed positively to the improvement of the narrative art in Tang fiction.<sup>8</sup>

The last but not the least important factor that led to the improvement of the status of fiction was "Ancient Style Prose Movement" (*guwen yundong* 古文運動) headed by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819). The target of criticism was *pianti wen* 駢體文 (parallel prose), whose features had been highly valued, and deliberately observed, in prose composition in the Six Dynasties. Han Yu and his followers attacked this style of writing for the artificiality and superficiality of its prosodic qualities, lexical pairing, and syntactical parallelism, accusing it of hampering logical argument and retarding the free and accurate expression of ideas. They promoted the idea of modelling one's writings on classical texts represented by the Confucian classics, *Shi Ji* 史記 (Records of Grand Historian), and *Han Shu*.

The chief advocator of this literary reform, Han Yu, even experimented with using *guwen* to write an allegorical story "Mao Ying Zhuan" 毛穎傳 (The Bibliography of Mao Ying) in spite of derision and criticism from conservative scholars. In his response to the accusation made by Zhang Ji 張籍 (fl.800) that "Mao Ying" was "promiscuous stuff of no substance" (*bo za wu shi* 駁雜無實),<sup>9</sup> Han Yu declared that this story had been intended "for fun" (*wei xi* 為戲).<sup>10</sup> He also cited the

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<sup>7</sup> *Youguai Lu* 幽怪錄 (Records of the Dark and Strange), also entitled *Xuanguailu* 玄怪錄 (Records of the Mysterious and Strange), is a collection of supernatural and marvellous tales written by Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779-847). *Chuanqi* 傳奇 (Marvel-transmitting Stories) here refers to the tale collection written by Pei Xing 裴鉞 (fl. 870). As to whether *Youguai Lu* and *Chuanqi* were meant for sample compositions, contemporary scholars tend to be negative or sceptical. Ye Qingbing 葉慶炳 (1987: 479-481; 482-483) dismisses the idea as unfounded although he (1987: 458-9) agrees that the practice of *wenjuan* stimulated the production of *chuanqi* fiction. As to *Youguai Lu* being referred to in *Yunlu Manchao* as an example of sample compositions, Hou Zhongyi (1997: 8) believes that this work must have been confused with *Xu Xuanguailu* 續玄怪錄 (A Sequel to *Xuanguai Lu*) written by Li Fuyan 李復言 (775-833), who is recorded by the Song scholar Qian Yi 錢易 in *Juan One of Nanbu Xinshu* 南部新書 (A New Book from the South) to have submitted tales of the marvellous to an examiner named Li Jingrang 李景讓. For this record in *Nanbu Xinshu*, see Qian Yi (1963: 01/7).

<sup>8</sup> For more about the impact of *wenjuan* upon Tang literature, see Chen Qianfan (1980).

<sup>9</sup> See Zhang Ji (1965: 8882-8883).

<sup>10</sup> See Han Yu (1965a: 7079-7080).

*Shi Ji* and *Shi Jing* to justify the entertaining aspects of literature, arguing that literature was not only for the sake of edification but also for amusement.<sup>11</sup>

Liu Zongyuan stood firmly on the side of Han Yu by lending his personal support to Han Yu in defence of "Mao Ying Zhuan".<sup>12</sup> He also took up pen to write *chuanqi* stories, like "Hejian Zhuan" 河間傳 (The Story of Hejian). Through their writing practice and enthusiastic publicity, *guwen* stylists successfully expanded their influence into the field of fiction, which had long been ignored and despised by official and orthodox scholars, and therefore greatly helped improve the position of fiction in literature.

Under their influence, storytelling came into fashion among elite and literary circles. Successful candidates continued to write stories for amusement even after the practical demand had ceased to apply. They delighted in inventing tales and circulating them among friends. The appearance of stories bearing famous names revealed to those who had failed the civil service examination another way of obtaining a sense of achievement. They turned to writing stories as a medium for the expression of their frustrated ambition.

Different from their Six Dynasties counterparts, Tang works of fiction first appeared as individual compositions, rather than as collections. Later, tales by a single author were collected and made into book forms to meet the increasing demands for stories. Tang fiction as a whole may be described in terms of the subject matter as belonging to four major categories: political satires,<sup>13</sup> love stories,<sup>14</sup> tales of

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<sup>11</sup> See Han Yu (1965b: 7080-7081).

<sup>12</sup> See Liu Zongyuan (1958: 366-367).

<sup>13</sup> Political satires in *chuanqi* style constitute a most striking category of the Tang tales. The utilization of literature as a weapon for personal and political attack began in the Tang dynasty with the anonymous *Baiyuan Zhuan* 白猿傳 (The Biography of the White Ape). Other famous Tang political satires are *Zhou-Qin Xing Ji* 周秦行記 (A Journey through Zhou and Qin) by Wei Guan 韋瓘 (attri.), *Niu Yang Riji* 牛羊日記 (The Calendar of Niu and Yang) by Liu Ke 劉軻 (attrib.), *Zhenzhong Ji* 枕中記 (A Record of the Inside of the Pillow) by Shen Jiji 沈既濟, and *Nanke Taishou Zhuan* 南柯太守傳 (The Governor of the Southern Tributary State) by Li Gongzuo 李公佐.

<sup>14</sup> Of the four groups of Tang fiction, love stories are by far the most removed from myths and legends, and from the religious marvels and supernatural miracles, and the most representative of stories in *chuanqi* form. Of longer narratives, most take the form of fictional biographies with at least a basis in fact. Famous Tang stories of this type are *Liu Shi Zhuan* 柳氏傳 (The Biography of Miss Liu) by Xu Yaozuo 許堯佐, *Li Wa Zhuan* 李娃傳 (The Biography of Li Wa) by Bai Xingjian 白行簡, *Yingying Zhuan* 鶯鶯傳 (The Biography of Yingying) by Yuan Zhen 元稹, and *Huo Xiaoyu Zhuan* 霍小玉傳 (The Biography of Huo Xiaoyu) by Jiang Fang 蔣防.

adventure,<sup>15</sup> and tales of the strange and supernatural. The rise of tales about men and the world in the Tang era did not in the least signify the decline of *zhiguai* tales. Of the four groups of the Tang fiction, the last remained by far the largest.<sup>16</sup> Even in tales falling into the first three categories, one can easily find supernatural elements such as feats of magic, the fulfilment of omens, strange people with supernatural power, and devoted animals endowed with human nature and intelligence. As the oldest and best known, this was the theme most often produced during the Tang and Five Dynasties.

Tang tales of the strange and supernatural in general continued the previous "note-form" (*biji* 筆記) writing conventions and developed alongside the *zhiguai* tradition of the Six Dynasties. Unlike political satires, and prose romances (love/hero stories), they tend to be short and therefore usually appear in collections rather than as individual compositions, although they differ from earlier stories of the same type in having more closely knit plots and more colourful detail.

- Niu Sengru and his *Xuanguai Lu*

Of the numerous *zhiguai* collections of the Tang, the best-known Tang *zhiguai* collection is *Xuanguai Lu* by Niu Sengru. This book is listed in TSYWZ,<sup>17</sup> and SSYWZ<sup>18</sup> as being composed of 10 *juan*, and included in *Juan* 11 of the *Lei Shuo* 類說 (Categorised Fiction) under the title of *Youguai Lu* 幽怪錄<sup>19</sup> so as to avoid mentioning Xuanlang 玄朗, Emperor Shizu 始祖 of the Song dynasty by name.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This type of tales generally came out a little later than the other three types. Earlier examples are *Xie Xiao'e Zhuan* 謝小娥傳 (The Biography of Xie Xiao'e) by Li Gongzuo 李公佐 and *Feng Yan Zhuan* 馮燕傳 (The Biography of Feng Yan) by Shen Yazhi 沈亞之, both of which belong to the middle of the Tang dynasty, when the imperial power was declining rapidly after the revolt of An Lushan 安祿山 in 755. Most of the adventure stories, however, came out towards the end of the Tang dynasty, when the empire was plunged into a chaotic state with local warlords frequently at war with each other. Tales of this type produced during this period of time appeared mainly in such collections as *Chuanqi, Ganze Yao* 甘澤謠 (Ballads of Spring Rain) by Yuan Jiao 袁郊, and *Yuanhua Ji* 原化記 (Records of Explorations into Transformations) by Huangfu 皇甫.

<sup>16</sup> Of the two hundred and twenty-five works of fiction listed in Li Jianguo (1993), more than eighty belong to the *zhiguai* category, which amounts to two thirds of the total output of the Tang and Five Dynasties fiction.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> Thirty-one items from *Youguai Lu* were collected by Zeng Zao 曾慥 (fl. 1140) in the *Lei Shuo*, which is quoted in Vol. 873 of SKQS, pp. 186-194.

<sup>20</sup> In imperial China, it was taboo to mention the emperor or one's ancestors by name.



Although the original text was lost sometime during or after the Southern Song dynasty, a considerable part of this book is preserved in fragments in TPGJ, where thirty-three items are quoted with their sources credited to *Xuanguai Lu*. The Ming edition of *Xuanguai Lu*, which was printed from engraved blocks by Chen Yingxiang 陳應翔, contains forty-four items in 4 *juan* and the sole copy extant today of this edition is kept in the National Library of China. In 1982 appeared a modern version of this work, edited and annotated by Cheng Yizhong. This text, which contains forty-six items in four *juan* with another 12 items as addenda, is the most comprehensive edition available today.<sup>21</sup>

Niu Sengru, whose other name was Niu Si'an 牛思黯, was a native of Chungu 鶉觚 of Anding 安定 in present-day Lingtai 靈台 of Gansu Province. He was a literary figure of great influence in the middle of the Tang dynasty. Han Yu thought highly of his literary talents after reading his composition exercise, saying "Your writings will entitle you not only to success in the examinations but also to enduring fame."<sup>22</sup> With the strong support of Han Yu, Niu Sengru won fame across the empire even before he had taken the imperial civil service examination. After he became a *jinsh* scholar in 805, he was made a minor officer in Yique 伊闕, and in later years, he was variously promoted to the positions of censor, deputy minister of the ministry of finance, and eventually deputy prime minister during the reign of Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (821-825).

Niu Sengru was extremely rich in imagination and good at telling stories. On the surface, *Xuanguai Lu* appears quite similar to *zhiguai* works of the Six Dynasties, especially in the way of introducing the main character(s), which therefore gives the impression that the book is nothing more than "a record of Sui-Tang miracles, marvels, ghosts and anomalies" (*zai Sui-Tang shenqi guiyi zhi shi* 載隋唐神奇鬼異之事), as noted by the Ming scholar Gao Ru 高儒 in *Juan* 8 of his *Baichuan Shuzhi* 百川書誌 (Book Records of Hundred Streams).<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, *Xuanguai Lu* is a highly imaginative work of fiction produced to display the author's literary talent and imaginative power rather than "prove the truth of the existence of the supernatural beings," as Gan Bao admitted in his preface to SSJ, although some of the items in it

<sup>21</sup> Attached to this edition are 23 items from *Xu Xuanguailu* in 4 *juan*.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Chen Shouyi (1961: 293).

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Wu Zhida (1994: 412).

do remind one of the short and scanty Six Dynasties tales. Niu Sengru made no attempt to conceal his intention of inventing the imaginative, as strongly suggested by the title of the story "Yuan Wuyou" 元無有 (The Story of the Man by the Name of Originally No Such Thing).<sup>24</sup> We are not sure whether Niu was the first Chinese writer to unveil his intention of fabricating stories, but it is certain that *Xuanguai Lu* is not, as Gao Ru assumed, a historical record of strange things.

Zhiguai tales in *Xuanguai Lu* can be generally divided into three types: stories about adventure, stories about love between men and supernatural beings, and stories about magic arts/ miraculous signs. "Guo Daigong" 郭代公 (Duke of Daiguo, Guo Yuanzhen) is a well-known adventure story.<sup>25</sup> The hero in this story is Guo Yuanzhen 郭元振, who chops off a hand of 'the Black General', a devil who annually demands that the local people offer him a virgin girl as bride. On examination, he discovers it is a trotter, follows the bloody trail and tracks the pig spirit to its den, where, with the help of the villagers, he kills it.

"Cui Shusheng" 崔書生 (Scholar Cui) is a beautifully-written story of love between a man and a goddess.<sup>26</sup> Cui, a scholar who lives at the entrance to a ravine, is devoted to tending flowers and bamboo trees in his garden. One day a beautiful young lady passes his garden on horseback, accompanied by her maids, and on the ensuing mornings, she is seen riding a horse and passing his garden with her maids following at her heels as before. Out of admiration for her beauty, Cui invites her to have a drink in his garden, and after his invitation is declined, he follows the lady all the way to her residence. Moved by his sincerity, the lady eventually agrees to marry him. Being in failing health, Cui's mother suspects her beautiful daughter-in-law to be a fox spirit and the cause of her illness. The lady, who is later revealed to be Yuzhi Niangzi 玉卮娘子 (Lady Jade Wine Vessel), the third daughter of Queen Mother of the West, feels deeply hurt and takes her departure from Cui, leaving a white jade box as a souvenir.

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 369 of TPGJ.

<sup>25</sup> This story is included in Wang Pijiang 汪辟疆 (1978: 212-214), who collects it from a Ming copy of the *Shuo Fu*. In TPGJ, there are two items entitled "Guo Yuanzhen" 郭元振, each of which, however, tells a different story from this one about Guo Yuanzhen.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 63 of TPGJ.

Niu's capacity for creating suspense and building up a mysterious atmosphere is fully expressed in the fantastic story of "Hou Yu" 侯適 through the sudden rise and sudden fall of Hou's fortunes.<sup>27</sup> Hou, a scholar, discovers that the four stones he has picked up have turned into gold. He sells them at market, and becomes well-off overnight. He begins to live a lavish and extravagant life, but his good fortune does not last long. Years later, a strange shabby-looking old man demands that Hou pay off his debts to him after his request to join Hou and his concubines in their picnic is turned down. The old man seizes all his concubines by hand, puts them all into a book basket, and disappears instantly.<sup>28</sup> From then on, Hou's fortunes decline rapidly, and on the journey to his hometown, the old man and his former concubines appear out of nowhere and stand in his way, hurling mockeries at him. When he tries to approach them for an explanation, they disappear into thin air like a gust of wind, thus leaving Hou as well as the reader puzzled as to who the mysterious old man is, and how a book basket can contain dozens of women.

- *Hedong Ji* and *Jiyi Ji*: *zhiguai* works written in imitation of *Xuanguai Lu*

Niu enjoyed a high nation-wide reputation for his literary talents, which made his work extremely well known and widely imitated. Apart from the above mentioned *Xu Xuanguai Lu*, other famous Tang collections of tales modelled on *Xuanguai Lu* are *Hedong Ji* 河東記 (Tales of Hedong) by Xue Yusi 薛漁思 (fl.810), and *Jiyi Ji* 集異記 (Collected Records of Anomalies) by Xue Yongruo 薛用弱 (fl. 820).

*Hedong Ji* does not appear in any catalogue books in the official histories of the Tang or Song dynasty such as TSJJZ, TSYWZ, and SSYWZ. The earliest known records of this work are found in *Junzhai Dushu Zhi* 郡齋讀書志 (An Annotated Catalogue of Books Read at Junzhai Study, hereafter JZDSZ) by Chao Gongwu

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 400 of TPGJ.

<sup>28</sup> This motif of putting women into a book basket resembles that of "Waiguo Daoren" 外國道人 (A Foreign Daoist) from *Ling Gui Zhi*, and that of "Yangxian Shusheng" 陽羨書生 (The Scholar of Yangxian) from *Xu Qixieji* 續齊諧記 (A Sequel to *Records of Qi Xie*) by Wu Jun 吳均 (469-520). Fantasies of this type are not Chinese originally, and actually are borrowed from Buddhist sutras according to Lu Xun (1981: 48-50). For more about the influence of the Indian Buddhism on Chinese literature, see Ji Xianlin 季羨林 (1980) and Wang Li 王力 (2000).

晁公武 (fl.1170),<sup>29</sup> and in *Yijian Zhi* 夷堅志 (Records of Yijian, hereafter YJZ) by Hong Mai.<sup>30</sup> Like most Tang fiction, *Hedong Ji* does not survive in the original form, but fortunately, part of it is preserved in *leishu* and *congshu*. There are five items included in the *Shuo Fu* with *Hedong Ji* listed as the source, while thirty-three items from this work are quoted in TPGJ.

Of the tales extant from *Hedong Ji*, the most distinguished are those about transformations from men into animals or vice versa. "Shen Tucheng" 申圖澄 is a touching story of love between a man and a tiger girl.<sup>31</sup> On the journey to his new post, Shen Tucheng is caught in a snow storm, and stops for the night at a road-side thatched cottage, where he is warmly received by an old couple and their daughter. Struck by the beauty and intelligence of the girl, Shen makes a proposal to her, to which her parents grant their consent with pleasure. They then leave the place as husband and wife, and live a happy life, having two children after he assumes his office. Years later, Shen resigns his post, and takes his wife and children back to his hometown.

On the way, his wife shows Shen a poem written as a reply to a poem Shen dedicated to her sometime ago, in which she reveals her intention of retiring from the human world to live in the woods and mountains. When they arrive at the thatched cottage, to her disappointment, she finds no traces of her parents, although the house remains the same as they left it years ago. At the sight of a dust-covered tiger skin hanging on the wall, she cannot help putting it on and is instantly transformed into a

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<sup>29</sup> This work is recorded in JZDSZ as "containing 3 *juan* by an unknown author, and also devoted to accounts of mysterious and anomalous happenings." (*Hedong Ji san juan you bu zhu zhuanren ye ji jue guai zhi shi* 河東記三卷右不著撰人亦記譎怪之事). The version of JZDSZ I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vols. 001-002 of GJCS. For the entry of *Hedong Ji* in JZDSZ, see Vol. 002 of GJCS, p 248. It is worth mentioning that Chao is wrongly quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 74) as saying: [*Hedong Ji* in 3 *juan*] by the Tang writer Xue Yusi was also devoted to accounts of strange and anomalous happenings. The preface says that it was written as a supplement to Niu Sengru's work." (*Tang Xue Yusi zhuan ye ji jue guai shi xu yuan xu Niu Sengru zhi shu* 唐薛漁思撰亦記譎怪事序云續牛僧孺之書)

<sup>30</sup> Hong Mai mentions this work in "Yijian Zhi Kuiji Xu" (夷堅志·癸集序 (Preface to Collection Ten of YJZ), where *Hedong Ji* is juxtaposed with other influential Tang collections of supernatural tales like *Xuanguai Lu*, *Xu Xuanguai Lu*, and *Xuanshi Zhi*, and attributed to Xue Huansi 薛煥思. That is why the author of *Hedong Ji* is sometimes referred to as Xue Huansi. For Hong Mai's preface, see Ding Xigen (1996: 101).

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 429 of TPGJ.

tiger. Roaring with excitement, she rushes out into the mountain, leaving her husband behind dumbfounded.

In this story, Xue Yusi successfully builds up a lovely image of a tigress spirit through his delicate description of her fine appearance, her remarkable gift for poetry, and her uncontrollable aspiration for freedom. Although at the end of the story, the tiger spirit deserts her husband and children to join her parents in the mountains, she is still portrayed positively for her pursuit of freedom from worldly cares.

Another famous story about transformation is "Banqiao Sanniangzi" 板橋三娘子 (Madam Three at Ban Bridge).<sup>32</sup> Madam Three in the story is an evil and avaricious innkeeper with magic powers, who transforms her guests into donkeys by tricking them into eating her cakes and seizes their belongings after selling the donkeys at market. A man named Zhao Jihe sees through her tricks and punishes her by employing the same trick to transform her into a donkey. She starts with tricking others and ends up with herself being tricked.

During the Changqing 長慶 Period (821-824) there appeared a collection of tales called *Jiyi Ji* in 3 *juan* by Xue Yongruo,<sup>33</sup> which is noted in JZDSZ as "a collection of records of extraordinary events supposed to have occurred during the Sui-Tang periods," (*ji Sui-Tang jian jue gui zhi shi* 集隋唐間譎詭之事).<sup>34</sup> It was later recorded in TSYWZ<sup>35</sup> as containing three *juan* as was listed in JZDSZ. This 3-*juan* work most probably did not survive intact in the origin beyond the Song dynasty, which accounts for its being listed as comprising only one *juan* in SSYWZ,<sup>36</sup> and ZMTY.<sup>37</sup> The 1980 Zhonghua Shuju edition of *Jiyi Ji* adds up to 88 items, 81 of which are taken from TPGJ.

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 286 of TPGJ.

<sup>33</sup> *Jiyi Ji* in 3 *juan* by Xue Yongruo, alternatively entitled *Guyi Ji* 古異記 (Anomalous Records from Ancient Times), must not be confused with the *Jiyi Ji* in 2 *juan* by the Tang scholar Lu Xun 陸勳 as noted in an explanatory postscript to the entry of Xue's *Jiyi Ji* in *Juan* 142 of ZMTY. The *Jiyi Ji* by Lu Xun, which is also listed in SSYWZ but under the title of *Jiyi Zhi* 集異誌 (Collected Accounts of Anomalies), consists of a series of notes concerning marvels and strange apparitions, and covers a period from 221BC. to ca. 850 AD. For the entry of Lu's *Jiyi Ji* in JZDSZ and SSYWZ, see Vol. 002 of GJCS, p. 242; Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 83.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of GJCS, pp. 249.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2948.



Stories in *Jiyi Ji* can be roughly divided into three groups: religious tales, fictional biographies, and animal tales. In the first group, Daoist tales are in the majority, although there are also Buddhist records. The best-known religious tales from this work are "Li Qing" 李清,<sup>38</sup> and "Cai Shaoxia" 蔡少霞,<sup>39</sup> both of which are about Daoist immortals. Fictional biographies in this collection like "Ji Cui Qiu" 集翠裘 (The Emerald-embedded Fur Coat),<sup>40</sup> "Wang Wei" 王維<sup>41</sup>, and "Liu Yuxi" 劉禹錫<sup>42</sup> constitute another important part of *Jiyi Ji*, but the most interesting feature of this collection is its animal tales, especially stories about the relationship between men and dogs.

In the story "Pei Du" 裴度,<sup>43</sup> the hero has a dog. He loves it so much that whenever he is invited to dinner, he takes his dog with him, and even shares his food with the dog at the table. His son-in-law Li Jia cannot understand him and tries to persuade him not to act in this way. Hearing this, the dog develops a deep hatred for Li Jia and tries to kill him. Having been warned of the danger, Li Jia keeps a close watch over the dog for fear of being attacked. Eventually, the dog dies in great sorrow for his failure to take revenge.

The dog in "Pei Du" is described as possessing a strong sense of dignity, and it will take its revenge at any cost once it finds its dignity coming under threat. A dog can be your enemy if you ill-treat it, and on the other hand, it can be your devoted friend and can step out in a moment of crisis to protect you from harm. Another such dog features in the story "Yang Bao" 楊褒,<sup>44</sup> in which the animal risks its life to save its master Yang Bao from the murdering hands of his wife and her lover, and helps bring them to justice.

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 36 of TPGJ.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 55 of TPGJ.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 404 of TPGJ, this story is about the famous Tang Prime Minister Di Renjie 狄仁傑 (607-700).

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 179 of TPGJ, this story is about Wang Wei 王維 (699-759), an outstanding poet of the Tang dynasty. Besides being a poet, he was also a great pioneer in calligraphy and water-colour painting, as well as music.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 422 of TPGJ, this is a story about Liu Yuxi 柳禹錫 (772-842), an important poet and essayist of the Tang dynasty.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 437 of TPGJ.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 437 of TPGJ.



- Other major *zhiguai* works of the Tang: *Yi Shi*, *Yuanhua Ji*, *Xiaoxiang Lu* and *Tongyou Ji*

*Yi Shi* 逸史 (The Forgotten History) is listed as being composed of three *juan* in TSYWZ, and attributed to Luzi 廬子 (Scholar Lu) who lived during the Dazhong 大中 Period (847-859) of the Tang dynasty, as noted in TSYWZ.<sup>45</sup> In SSYWZ, this work is recorded under the title of *Lu Shi Yi Shi* 廬氏逸史 (Lu's Forgotten History) as containing one *juan*.<sup>46</sup> A record of *Luzi Yishi* is also found in *Suichutang Shumu* 遂初堂書目 (The Catalogue Book of Suichu Chamber, hereafter SCTSM) without giving the number of *juan* of this work.<sup>47</sup> None of the above-mentioned catalogue books give the full name of the author Lu, but a man by the name of Lu Zhao 廬肇 is referred to in *Bishu Luhua* 避暑錄話 (Records Made at a Summer Resort) by the Song scholar Ye Mengde 葉夢得 as the author of *Yi Shi*.<sup>48</sup>

*Yi Shi* is in no sense a book of history. Rather, it is "a collection of anomalies seen and heard," (*ji wen jian zhi yi zhe* 集聞見之異者) as the author states in the preface.<sup>49</sup> The stories in this work have a strong supernatural flavour, dealing with "deification and transformation, transcendental communications across the nether world, predestined rise and fall, and foreseen fortune and misfortune" (*shenhua bianhua, youmi gantong qianding shengchen, xianjian huofu* 神化變化幽竅感通前定昇沈先見禍福).<sup>50</sup> Although varied in subject matter, the majority of the items are religious tales about immortals and fictional biographies relating to well-known Tang figures. Famous stories about Daoist immortals from this work are "Liu Yan" 劉晏,<sup>51</sup> "Pei Lao" 裴老 (Old Pei)<sup>52</sup> and "Chen Sheng" 陳生 (Scholar Chen).<sup>53</sup> A striking feature about these stories is that contrary to convention, immortals in them are depicted almost exclusively as repulsive and disgusting. They look dirty

<sup>45</sup> For the entry of *Yi Shi* in TSYWZ, see Vol. 002/ CSJCJB, p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002/ CSJCJB, p. 84.

<sup>47</sup> The version of SCTSM I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 002 of CSJCJB. For the entry of *Yi Shi* in SCTSM, see Vol. 002/ CSJCJB, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Cheng Yizhong (1980:68).

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 291).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 39 of TPGJ.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 42 of TPGJ.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 74 of TPGJ.

and shabby, and behave humbly and strangely, often turning out to be the object of our pity.

Since immortals look no superior to us mortals, when men are confronted with the choice between becoming an immortal in Heaven and being made a high-ranking official in this world, they usually will not be able to resist the temptation of worldly power and wealth, and prefer to live in the mortal world rather than in Heaven. This theme is strung through the fictional biographies in this collection, such as "Qi Ying" 齊映,<sup>54</sup> "Li Linfu" 李林甫,<sup>55</sup> and "Taiyin Furen" 太陰夫人 (Lady Taiyin).<sup>56</sup>

While inquiring about the civil service examination in the capital city, Qi Ying meets with an immortal in the guise of an old man in a white robe. When asked about his wishes, he replies that he wishes to be Prime Minister rather than become an immortal. His wish, however, does not come true owing to his failure to keep the secret from his friends of his encountering with the immortal.

Li Linfu was a notoriously evil-minded and silver-tongued Prime Minister of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (685-762) of the Tang dynasty. The story says that at an early age, Li Linfu was addicted to hunting and playing *maqiu* 馬球 (Chinese polo), giving no thought to the future. However, one day when a Daoist priest came to reveal to him that he had been selected for immortality, but if he preferred, he could instead choose to be Prime Minister for twenty years. Much to the disappointment of the priest, Li Linfu replied that he would rather be Prime Minister. When he later felt regret for his choice, it was too late for him to change the decision.

In *Yi Shi*, the best-known fictional biography is perhaps "Taiyin Furen", in which a man named Lu Si 盧杞<sup>57</sup> admires the beauty of Lady Taiyin, a goddess who lives in a crystal palace, but when offered the choice between living as an immortal with Lady Taiyin in Heaven and becoming a wealthy and influential Prime Minister in China, he chooses the latter without much hesitation.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, there appeared another collection of tales of the supernatural and marvellous entitled *Yuanhua Ji*. This work does not

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 35 of TPGJ.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 19 of TPGJ.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 64 of TPGJ.

<sup>57</sup> Lu Si was Prime Minister of the Tang dynasty during the Jianzhong 建中 Period (780-784), as recorded in *Juan* 135 of *Jiu Tang Shu*, and in *Juan* 223 of *Xin Tang Shu* in the "Jianchen Zhuan" 奸臣傳 (Stories of Treacherous Court Officials) Section.

survive intact. Quoted in TPGJ are fifty-nine items with *Yuanhua Ji* given as the source, and nine items from this work are preserved in the *Lei Shuo*. The items extant today from *Yuanhua Ji* are mostly dated between the Kaiyuan 開元 (713-742) Period and the Taihe 太和 Period (827-835) of the Tang dynasty.<sup>58</sup> It follows from this that this work was completed no earlier than 827 AD. A record of this work in one *juan* is found in the *Tong Zhi* 通誌 (General History) by the Song scholar Zheng Qiao 鄭樵, who attributed the authorship of this work "in one *juan*" to a Tang Scholar named Huangfu, about whom little is known.<sup>59</sup>

The title of this collection is somewhat misleading in that the Chinese characters "原化" suggest that this work is meant to be an investigation into changes and transformations, but, upon a close look at the stories in this collection, one will find that *Yuanhua Ji* is, in fact, of diverse subject matter. Tales about transfigurations constitute only a small part of the collection, while a considerable proportion is devoted to adventure and animal stories.

"Nanyang Shiren" 南陽士人 (A Scholar of Nanyang)<sup>60</sup> is a well-known story dealing with transfiguration in *Yuanhua Ji*. In this tale, a man is transformed into a tiger by gods and seven months later transformed back into his real self after eating an official as instructed. This story is different from the earlier stories of this type in that the emphasis is not on the process of or the reason for the transformation, but on the psychological experience on the part of the man of being transformed into an animal. Through a vivid description of the tiger's inner world, the author of this story successfully presents to us a "human side" of animals.

Animals are our equals and have feelings and emotions like us human beings, which constitutes an important theme in many animal tales from this collection. As shown in "Yang Bao" from *Jiyi Ji*, when well treated, they will be happy and grateful; when ill-treated, they will be angry and vengeful. The stress on the "human nature" of animals is most clearly reflected in such stories as "Han Xi" 韓晞<sup>61</sup> and

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<sup>58</sup> A tale entitled "Guanglu Tuzhe" 光祿屠者 (The Butcher of Guanglu) from *Yuanhua Ji* has its setting placed during the Taihe Period. For this item, see *Juan* 434 of TPGJ.

<sup>59</sup> For the entry of *Yuanhua Ji* in the *Tong Zhi*, see Vol. 374 of SKQS, p. 405.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 432 of TPGJ.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 435 of TPGJ.

"Jiangdong Ke Ma" 江東客馬 (The Horse of a Man from Jiangdong).<sup>62</sup> The first story tells how Han Xi is saved by his own horse from being bitten to death by another horse, and that from then on, he loves his horse even more than before. In the second story, a man sells his horse which he considers to be of no more use to him, and later narrowly escapes death under the hoofs of the avenging horse.

Men and animals are part of nature, as are rivers, and mountains. It is requisite and also rewarding for men to live in harmony with them, and love them and protect them from being harmed. Such a message runs through the tales dealing with men's relationship with non-human beings in *Yuanhua Ji*. No stories of this type in this work could be better known and more popular than "Wu Kan" 吳堪.<sup>63</sup> This story is composed of two parts, with the first part being substantially an imitation of "Baishui Sunü" from *Xu Soushen Ji*.

Wu Kan, a junior county official, has a high sense of what is nowadays termed environmental protection, and tries hard to prevent a stream flowing in front of his house from being polluted, and for this is rewarded by the Heavenly Emperor with a magic shell. From the shell comes out a goddess, who has been sent down from Heaven to marry Wu Kan and help keep his house. From here the story enters into the second part, in which the county magistrate, covetous of the beauty of the heavenly goddess, intends to seize her from Wu. He plots to trap Wu Kan with difficult tasks. With the help of his goddess wife, however, Wu Kan fulfils all the tasks and has the magistrate and his household punished before leaving the human world.

The interest of the Tang's fiction writers in animals cannot be over-estimated. As we have seen, many Tang tales deal with the transformation of men into animals or animals into men, and explore the relationship between men and animals. Even sexual relationships between men and animals can be a topic in Tang fiction. Good examples are "Du Xiuji" 杜修己,<sup>64</sup> and "Jiao Feng" 焦封.<sup>65</sup>

Du Xiuji's wife has an affair with a white dog. She makes love to the animal whenever Du is out, and becomes pregnant by the dog. When the animal dies, the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 83 of TPGJ.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 438 of TPGJ.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 446 of TPGJ.

mother and her baby boy are left without anybody to look after. Out of pity, Du takes them back home. The boy, however, cannot change his canine nature. He continues to live a wanton life, incurring rebukes from Du. Filled with resentment against Du, the son runs away from home and years later leads bandits to kill Du's whole family except his mother.

"Jiao Feng" is a story reminiscent of "Sheng Tucheng" from *Hedong Ji* in that a female chimpanzee spirit falls in love with a young scholar, and transforms into a beautiful young lady in order to marry him, but months later, she transforms back into her self and leaves the scholar for the mountain because she feels that she cannot bear to live a life without her fellow chimpanzees keeping her company.

Both the stories mentioned above are extracted from *Xiaoxiang Lu* 瀟湘錄 (Records from the Xiaoxiang River), a work listed as containing ten *juan* in TSYWZ,<sup>66</sup> and the *Tong Zhi*,<sup>67</sup> which gives a Tang scholar named Liu Xiang 柳詳 as the author. It was later recorded in SSYWZ,<sup>68</sup> and also in *Zhizhai Shulu Jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (A Catalogue Book with Annotations by Zhizhai, hereafter SLJT),<sup>69</sup> both of which, however, ascribe the authorship to the Tang scholar Li Yin 李隱, about whom little is known except that he lived around the Xiantong 咸通 Period (873-874), as noted in TSYWZ under the entry of *Datang Qishi Ji* 大唐奇事記 (Records of Strange Happenings during the Great Tang).<sup>70</sup> The original book was lost some time during the Song or Yuan dynasty. Most of the extant items from it are preserved in TPGJ, in which forty-three items are referred to as taken from *Xiaoxiang Lu* and dated from the early Tang Zhenguan 貞觀 Period (627-650) to the late Tang Xiantong Period.<sup>71</sup>

Although traditionally criticised as "filled with vulgarity and fallacy" (*da miu ji lou* 大謬極陋),<sup>72</sup> *Xiaoxiang Lu* as a whole is by no means fallacious and filthy.

<sup>66</sup> See Vol. 002/CSJCJB, p. 58.

<sup>67</sup> See Vol. 374 of SKQS, p. 404.

<sup>68</sup> It is worth mentioning here that there are two *xiaoshuo* works entitled *Xiaoxiang Lu* in 10 *juan* listed in SSYWZ, one attributed to Li Yin, the other to Liu Xiang. For the entry of Liu Xiang's *Xiaoxiang Lu* in SSYWZ, see Vol. 002/CSJCJB, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> SLJT was compiled by Chen Zhensun 陳振聲, whose style name was Zhizhai 直齋. The version of this catalogue book I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 003 of GJCS. For the entry of *Xiaoxiang Lu* in SLJT, see Vol. 003/ GJCS, p. 327.

<sup>70</sup> For the entry of *Datang Qishi Ji* in TSYWZ, see Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 56.

<sup>71</sup> In the story "Zhang Ting" 張珽 there is a mention of the Huang Chao 黃巢 Rebellion (875-884), based on which, Cheng Yizhong (1990) dates *Xiaoxiang Lu* sometime later than the rebellion.

<sup>72</sup> For this comment by Hong Mai in his "Yijian Zhi Kuiji Xu", see Di Xigeng (1996: 101).

Rather, it is well worth our attention and reevaluation for its intrepid expositions of the hypocritical nature of contemporary moral codes, and the ignorance and arrogance of the elite class.

A case in point is the story "Xiangyang Lao Sou" 襄陽老叟 (An Old Man of Xiangyang).<sup>73</sup> This is a tragic story of love between two innocent young people. At the beginning of the story, a lad by the name of Bin Hua obtains a magic axe from an old man. With the axe, he builds a pavilion supported by a single column for a squire named Wang Mei. His craftsmanship draws the attention of Wang's daughter, who has been staying with her parents since the death of her husband. They soon fall in love with each other and live together secretly as husband and wife. Ashamed of his daughter having an affair with a carpenter, Wang finds an excuse to separate them. Bin Hua then builds for himself a wooden crane that can fly and elopes with his sweetheart to his hometown of Xiangyang riding the crane. In a rage, Wang reports the case to the governor of Xiangyang, who has Bin Hua put under arrest and flogged to death in court.

*Tongyou Ji* 通幽記 (Records from the Nether World), alternatively called *Tongyou Lu* 通幽錄, is also an important collection of tales of the supernatural, which came out towards the end of the Tang dynasty. This work is listed in TSYWZ as containing one *juan* and as being authored by a Tang scholar by the name of Chen Shao 陳劭,<sup>74</sup> but in SSYWZ<sup>75</sup> and in *Congwen Zongmu* 崇文總目 (A General Catalogue of the Chongwen Library, hereafter CWZM) as consisting of three *juan*.<sup>76</sup> *Tongyou Ji* was lost sometime after the compilation of TPGJ, where 27 items from this work are quoted. There is no record whatsoever of Chen Shao in any official biographies, and so his life remains a mystery to us.

Although some stories tell of immortals, *Tongyou Ji* is mainly devoted to accounts of the ghosts and devils from the dark world, as the title suggests. In some stories, ghosts and devils represent the ugliness of evil worldly forces. Elsewhere,

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 287 of TPGJ.

<sup>74</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 58

<sup>75</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 85

<sup>76</sup> The version of CWZM I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 001 of GJCS. For the entry of this work in CWZM, see Vol. 001/GJCS, p. 158.



however, they symbolise the indomitable spirit of the oppressed and wronged. A good example of this type of stories in this work is "Dou Ning Qie" 竇凝妾 (Dou Ning's Concubine),<sup>77</sup> an extremely sentimental story about an avenging female ghost. Dou Ning has a concubine who is pregnant, and in order to marry a woman named Cui, he murders her and her unborn twin babies. The ghost of the murdered concubine does not let it go at that but returns to the living world haunting Dou's household until justice is done to the murderer Dou Ning.

## Section 2: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Five Dynasties

- Du Guangting and his series of stories about immortals

The Five Dynasties was a transitional period in the evolutionary history of Chinese fiction in the literary language. During this period appeared around thirty works of fiction, most of which contain supernatural elements. The best known *zhiguai* writers of the Five Dynasties is perhaps Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), also known as Du Shengbin 杜聖賓, to whom at least seven works of fiction are ascribed.<sup>78</sup> As one of the most prolific writers of the Five Dynasties, he is best remembered for his stories about the lives and miracles of Daoist transcendentalists.

The history of Chinese tales of immortals can be traced back to the Western Han dynasty. The earliest extant collection of this type is *Liexian Zhuan* in two *juan*. During the Six Dynasties there appeared more collections of immortal tales, of which *Shenxian Zhuan* 神仙傳 (Stories of Gods and Immortals) in ten *juan* by Ge Hong 葛洪 (284-364) is the most famous. This tradition continued into the Tang and reached its peak in the Five Dynasties with the appearance of Du's three collections of tales of Daoist immortals — *Yongcheng Jixian Lu*, *Xianzhuan Shiyi*, and *Shenxian Ganyu Zhuan*.

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<sup>77</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 130 of TPGJ.

<sup>78</sup> The seven works of fiction are *Xianzhuan Shiyi* 仙傳拾遺 (Forgotten Tales of Immortals), and *Shenxian Ganyu Zhuan* 神仙感遇傳 (Accounts of Encounters with Immortals), *Yongcheng Jixian Lu* 壩城集仙錄 (Collected Records of Female Immortals), *Daojiao Lingyan Ji* 道教靈驗記 (Records of Daoist Occult Experiences), *Luyi Ji* 錄異記 (Accounts of Strange Things), *Guangcheng Ji* 廣成記 (Records of Guangcheng), and *Qiurang Ke Zhuan* 虯髯客傳 (The Biography of the Man with the Curly Beard). It is worth noting that *Qiurang Ke Zhuan* is attributed to Du Guangting in SSWZ, but to the Tang writer Zhang Yue 張說 in later fiction collectanea such as *Shuofu*, and *Wuchao Xiaoshuo*.

*Yongcheng Jixian Lu* is the first work of supernatural fiction, which, as the title suggests,<sup>79</sup> is devoted exclusively to "records of women past and present attaining the Way and rising to Heaven to become immortals" (*ji gujin nüzi dedao shengxian zhi shi* 紀古今女子得道昇仙之事).<sup>80</sup> Listed in ZMTY as containing 37 items in six *juan*,<sup>81</sup> and in SSYWZ as being composed of 10 *juan*,<sup>82</sup> this work does not come to us intact.<sup>83</sup> Another influential collection of immortal tales by Du Guangting is *Xianzhuan Shiyi*, which is listed in SSYWZ as containing forty *juan*.<sup>84</sup> This work has not survived in its original form, either. TPGJ quotes sixty items, of which ten are ascribed to *Shenxian Zhuan Shiyi* 神仙傳拾遺 (Forgotten Tales of Gods and Immortals), which is most likely to be another name for *Xianzhuan Shiyi*. Besides these sixty items, part of this work is preserved in fragments in other collectanea. Li Jianguo (1993) lists 128 items, and the Taiwan scholar Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (1974) has recompiled ninety-nine items.

Written as a supplement to the earlier *Liexian Zhuan* and *Shenxian Zhuan*, *Xianzhuan Shiyi* presents a fairly fascinating and interesting world of Daoist immortals through better description and characterisation, although quite a few tales in it come as a result of imitating or rewriting earlier accounts of immortals. An example of this is "Tian Xiansheng" 田先生 (Mr. Tian),<sup>85</sup> which is a story reworked by Du from an earlier version entitled "Qi Tui Nü" 齊推女 (Prefect Qi Tui's Daughter).<sup>86</sup> This story proceeds with the tragic death of Prefect Qi's married daughter, killed by the ghost of a former owner of the Prefect's house, the Han Prince of Wu Rui, who cannot bear the smell of childbirth. At the earnest entreaty of her husband Li, an old village teacher by the name of Tian, who is a Daoist immortal in disguise, arrests and tries the angry ghost, pronouncing it guilty of murder. He restores the murdered lady (whose body has decayed) to life by rolling eight women ghosts of Mrs Li's type in appearance into one and smearing a thick coat of glue over

<sup>79</sup> As the legend goes, Yongcheng is the holy place in Mt. Kunlun 崑崙, where Queen Mother of the West rules over female immortals.

<sup>80</sup> For this comment in the Daoist encyclopaedia *Yunji Qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Lots from the Bookcase of the Clouds, hereafter YJQQ), see Vol. 032 of CBSB, p. 793.

<sup>81</sup> See Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 3073.

<sup>82</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 71.

<sup>83</sup> For part of this work quoted in YJQQ, see Vol. 032 of CBSB, pp. 793-799.

<sup>84</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 71.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 44 of TPGJ.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 358 of TPGJ from *Xu Xuanguai Lu*.

the resultant body. Different from its earlier version, which centres on the death of Mrs. Li and her later rise to life, this story, with its focus fixed on Mr. Tian, successfully brings to prominence the Daoist hermit's elevated sense of justice and magic power through a vivid description of his trial and punishment of the murderer and the miraculous resurrection of the murdered woman.

As is the case with "Tian Xiansheng", "Yang Wengbo" 陽翁伯 is also a story reproduced from an earlier record.<sup>87</sup> Yang Wengbo is a man of great virtue with great filial piety for his parents. After his parents die, Yang Wengbo buries them in a mountain. He builds a small hut and keeps vigil over their coffins on the top of the mountain, where there is no water. Moved by his filial piety, the Heavenly Emperor makes a spring of water flow uphill from the foot of the mountain. Yang diverts the course of the spring so that other people can share the water with him. To reward Yang for his generosity, the god sends Yang some cobbles, out of which grows some white jade. The story ends with Yang and his wife carried up to Heaven by a dragon.

*Shenxian Ganyu Zhuan* is listed as containing ten *juan* under the category of Daoist literature in SSYWZ.<sup>88</sup> This work has not survived in its original form, either. There are ninety-five items extant today from this work, most of which are preserved in ZTDZ, YJQQ, and TPGJ.<sup>89</sup> ZMTY gives Du Guangting as the author of this work and describes it as containing five *juan* and devoted to "records of encounters with immortals from ancient times on," (*ji gu lai yu xian zhi shi* 記古來遇仙之事).<sup>90</sup>

The Tang and Five Dynasties writers of fiction were the first to use the tale to attack their political opponents, and they were also the first in the history of Chinese literature to use the tale to belittle and disparage rival religions and promote their own religious beliefs. A case in point is "Shi Xuanzhao" 釋玄照 (Monk Xuanzhao)<sup>91</sup> from *Shenxian Ganyu Zhuan*, which reads unmistakably as a religious satire.

This story tells how Xuanzhao, a monk who enjoys a high reputation for his great knowledge and strict observance of Buddhist doctrines, asks three dragons,

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<sup>87</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 4 of TPGJ from *Xianzhuan Shiyi*. An earlier version of this tale is found in *Juan* 11 of the 20-*juan* text of SSJ, quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 420.

<sup>88</sup> Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 71.

<sup>89</sup> A five-*juan* text of this work with seventy-five items in it is preserved in ZTDZ, forty-four items from this work are quoted in YJQQ, and twenty-seven items in TPGJ.

<sup>90</sup> Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 3072-3073.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 420 of TPGJ

who have been transformed into human beings to attend his Buddhist Sutra lectures on *Fahua Jing* 法華經 (the Lotus of the True Law), to stop a serious drought by bringing rain to the parched land. They agree, on the condition that the Daoist recluse Sun Simiao 孫思邈<sup>92</sup> promises to intercede with the Heavenly Emperor for leniency on them in case they are punished for bringing rain without having obtained permission from Heaven. Thus the monk has to turn to the Daoist Sun for help and, after securing a promise from him, the three dragons summon rain and bring the drought to an end, and further on the request of the monk, they have a mountain in front of the Buddhist temple removed.

Monk Xuanzhao in this story is depicted as a devoted Buddhist who is enthusiastic about preaching Buddhist sutras and desirous of helping people out of their sufferings. Ironically, although he has a strong desire to do good, he lacks the power necessary to put it into effect. In contrast, Sun Simiao, a modest and altruistic Daoist hermit, has not only the will to give help but also has the power to do so. And more importantly, he lends help but asks for nothing in return.

- Wang Renyu and his *Yutang Xianhua*

Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880-956), whose courtesy name was Denian 德輦, was a native of Tianshui 天水 in present-day Gansu Province. He was elected to the *Hanlin Yuan* 翰林院 (The Royal Academy) during the years of the Former Shu 前蜀 Period (891-925), and was later made Minister of Finance, and then Minister of War during the Later Han 後漢 Period (947-950).<sup>93</sup>

Wang Renyu was a prolific and wide-ranging writer and poet of the Five Dynasties. He wrote more than ten thousand poems and collected them into *Xijiang Ji* 西江集 (Collected Poems of Xijiang). Besides writing poems, he was also interested in collecting anecdotes present and past of various kinds, and adapting

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<sup>92</sup> Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682) is known in the history of traditional Chinese medicine as "Yao Wang" 藥王 (King of Remedies) for his *Qianjinfang* 千金方 (Thousand Gold Remedies) and *Qianjin Yifang* 千金醫方 (Thousand Gold of Medical Remedies).

<sup>93</sup> For more of his life, see *Jiu Wudai Shi: Zhou Shu* 舊五代史·周書 (The Old History of the Five Dynasties: the Zhou Section), pp. 1689-1690, and *Xin Wudai Shi: Wang Renyu Zhuan* 新五代史·王仁裕傳 (The New History of the Five Dynasties: the Biography of Wang Renyu), pp. 661-662.

them into stories. He is recorded in CWZM as authoring three collections of tales:<sup>94</sup> *Tang Mo Jianwen Lu* 唐末見聞錄 (Records of What Was Seen and Heard at the End of the Tang Dynasty) in five *juan*, *Kaiyuan Tianbao Yishi* 開元天寶遺事 (Forgotten Events of the Kaiyuan and Tianbao Periods) in four *juan*, and *Yutang Xianhua* 玉堂閑話 (Casual Talks at the Jade Hall)<sup>95</sup> in three *juan*.

Wang Renyu was a distinguished scholar, and enjoyed a high reputation for his broad knowledge and wide range of interests. Most of his prose narratives come in anecdotal form, and are varied in subject matter, ranging from secret incidents at court and fictional biographies of big names to folk legends and mysterious happenings. Among the above-mentioned four collections, *Yutang Xianhua* bears more *zhiguai* traits than any other work. Listed as containing one *juan* in SSYWZ,<sup>96</sup> but in CWZM as being composed of ten *juan*,<sup>97</sup> this work has not survived in its original form. Most of the extant items from this work are fragmentally preserved in TPGJ, where more than 160 items are credited to *Yutang Xianhua*.

Although the bulk of this collection is devoted to "yishi" 軼事 (anecdotes), fantastic animal tales and folk legends constitute its two most interesting aspects. Unsatisfied with the earlier animal tales which usually confine themselves to the description of animal physical features and magic endowments, Wang Renyu shows more interest in their emotional world and tries to display it through dedicated description of their psychological activities. Most representative of stories of this type in this collection is "Ying" 鶯 (Orioles)<sup>98</sup>, which tells in a most touching manner how a baby oriole is caught and kept in a bird cage, and how its parents feed it at the risk of their lives while wailing day and night outside the cage, and how they kill themselves in despair when they are not allowed to fly in to feed their baby.

Included in this collection are quite a few stories adapted from folk tales. The most popular of them is "Guanyuan Nü Ying" 灌園女嬰 (The Baby Daughter of a Vegetable Gardener).<sup>99</sup> An earlier version of this story appears under the title of

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<sup>94</sup> For the records in CWZM of the three collections by Wang Renyu, see Vol. 001/GJCS, p.117.

<sup>95</sup> In former times, *Hanlin Yuan* was sometimes referred to as "yutang" 玉堂 (the Hall of Jade), and it follows that stories and anecdotes in this collection were written during the years when Wang served as a *Hanlin* academician (翰林學士).

<sup>96</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> See Vol. 001 of GJCS, p. 120.

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 463 of TPGJ.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 160 of TPGJ.



“Dinghun Dian” 定婚店 (The Marriage Inn)<sup>100</sup> in the Tang *zhiguai* collection *Xu Xunguai Lu* by Li Fuyan. In this story, a young scholar asks a fortune-teller about his marriage, and much to his dismay, is told that he has been predestined to marry the daughter of a gardener who lives on growing vegetables. Unable to bear to have as wife a girl of low birth, he steals into the house of the gardener with a needle, and thrusts it into the crown of the baby girl's head and runs away secretly. Miraculously, the girl does not die as the scholar wishes. Rather, she is adopted by a high-ranking official after the death of her parents, and lives a happy and healthy life. When she grows into a beautiful young lady of noble airs, the official marries her to none other than the scholar, who takes her home with great honour and pleasure without knowing that she is the very girl he intended to put to death years earlier.

- A brief conclusion

In this chapter, we have made an investigation into some new social and cultural factors arising from Tang society and discussed their impact upon the *zhiguai* literature. As we have seen in the Tang works of supernatural fiction, the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* tradition continued to be observed by Tang writers. They, however, were no longer content with making records of historical or legendary happenings, as their Six Dynasties counterparts did. Tang fiction writers developed a consciousness of making up fantastic stories, and as a result, *zhiguai* works began to be read as something fictional rather than historical records of strange and supernatural happenings.

The significant changes Tang writers brought about to the *zhiguai* genre was far from being limited to their revolutionary new concept of fabricating stories. In form, a more embellished and sophisticated narrative style known as *chuanqi* was developed in telling stories, and more attention was given to portraying characters and arranging plots. And in theme, Tang *zhiguai* works displayed a wider scope of contents with realistic elements figuratively incorporated in their fantastic accounts of the strange. All these combine together to constitute features markedly distinct

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<sup>100</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 159 of TPGJ.



from those of the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* works, and to contribute to *zhiguai* maturing into an independent genre of fictional writings.

## Chapter Four: Supernatural Fiction during the Song, Jin and Yuan Dynasties

### Section 1: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Song dynasty

- Cultural achievements under the Song

The collapse of the Tang was followed by internal division and civil strife, a period conventionally designated as "Wudai Shiguo" 五代十國 (the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms), which lasted for more than half a century until China was again united in 960 under the Song dynasty. The Song dynasty endured frequent military clashes with nomadic peoples at its northern frontiers, but this did not prevent notable progress in cultural spheres. The literary movement led by Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan in the ninth century, after a short period of recession during the Five Dynasties, gained momentum during the Song dynasty, which witnessed a great renaissance of interest in *guwen* prose. Under the pen of Song scholars, the Tang *guwen* was developed into an even more mature and beautiful prose style, and became a model for prose writing for students and scholars of later dynasties to imitate. The importance of the Song dynasty in the development of *guwen* is well manifested in the fact that of the eight acknowledged *guwen* masters of Chinese literary history, six are Song scholars.<sup>1</sup> The development of *guwen*, together with the rise of *ci* 詞 poetry,<sup>2</sup> and *huaben* 話本 (story-tellers' scripts) fiction,<sup>3</sup> is the most distinctive contribution the Song dynasty made to Chinese literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, Ouyang Xiu, Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019-1083), Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009-1066), Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101), and Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039-1112), of whom all were Song writers except Han Yu and Liu Zongyun, are generally referred to in Chinese literary history as "the eight Tang and Song masters of *guwen* essayists" (*tang song ba da jia* 唐宋八大家) owing to the *Tang-Song Ba Da Jia Wenchao* 唐宋八大家文鈔 (Collected Writings of Eight Tang and Song Masters), a collection of Tang and Song essays in ancient style compiled by the Ming scholar Mao Kun 茅坤 (1512-1601).

<sup>2</sup> *Ci* refers to a type of classical Chinese poetry of irregular lines to be sung to musical accompaniment.

<sup>3</sup> *Huaben*, which literally means "story roots", developed from the Tang *bianwen* 變文 (transformation texts), and was the earliest form of traditional Chinese fiction in the vernacular or semi-vernacular. In terms of length, and form and structure, the Song *huaben* fiction is divided into *pinghua* 平話 (stories in plain language), and *duanshu* 短書 (short stories), which later evolved respectively into full-fledged chapter-division novels known as *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說 and short stories in the vernacular known as *baihua duanpian xiaoshuo* 白話短篇小說.

However, the literary prosperity of the Song was not confined to the wide practice of *guwen* and *ci* among intellectuals, or to the great popularity of *huaben* fiction among common people in urban areas. It also expressed itself in the compilation and publication of *leishu*.<sup>4</sup> Soon after the reunification of China, the Song emperor launched a series of culturally significant projects. "To allay the discontent among the prominent scholars of the former states,"<sup>5</sup> the founder of the Song summoned them to the capital city to collect extracts according to categories from ancient books into *leishu*. Running parallel to the Song's great enthusiasm for compilation of *leishu* was the more efficient art of *huozi yinshua* 活字印刷 (printing with movable type) coming into common use during the Song, which made the large-scale publication of *leishu* possible.

Of numerous *leishu* produced in the Song dynasty, some were relatively short and on restricted groups of topics, others longer than any which had previously appeared. The most influential were TPGJ, TPYL, *Wenyuan Yinghua* 文苑英華 (Finest Flowers in the Garden of Literature, hereafter WYYH),<sup>6</sup> and *Cefu Yuanguai* 冊府元龜 (The Grand Tortoise of the Libraries and Archives).<sup>7</sup>

- *Taiping Guangji* and classical Chinese supernatural fiction

TPGJ in 500 *juan* was compiled mostly from unofficial historical and bibliographical writings during the Period of Taiping Xingguo 太平興國 (976-983) under the reign of Emperor Taizong 太宗 of the Northern Song dynasty, with Li Fang as chief compiler. Li Fang, whose other name was Mingyuan 明遠, was a native of Raoyang 饒陽 in present-day Hebei province. During the Qianyou 乾祐 Period (947-950) of

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<sup>4</sup> The history of compiling *leishu* in China dates back to the Three Kingdoms period (221-265), when Liu Shao 劉瑯, Wang Xiang 王象 and other scholars compiled the first *leishu* in China entitled *Huang Lan* 皇覽 (Imperial Encyclopaedia) under the imperial decree of Emperor Wen of the Wei Dynasty, Cao Pi. From then on compilation of *leishu* became a tradition for rulers of later dynasties to follow until the Qing dynasty (1616-1911).

<sup>5</sup> Lu Xun (1981: 99). The Song scholar Wang Mingqing 王明清 (1127-?) was quoted in Ye Qingbing 葉慶炳 (1977: 12) as the first person claiming that the founder of the Song summoned prominent scholars from former states to court as highly paid compilers to placate them.

<sup>6</sup> WYYH in one thousand *juan* is a classified anthology of *belles-lettres* and poetry since the third century compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) *et. al.* as a sequel to the *Wen Xuan* by Xiao Tong.

<sup>7</sup> This work in 1000 *juan* is a history encyclopaedia compiled by Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025).

the Later Han dynasty (947-950), he passed the imperial civil service examination and became a *jinshi* scholar, and was then elected to the *Hanlin Yuan* during the Later Zhou dynasty (951-960). After the reunification of China under the Song, the founder of the dynasty set up the *Chongwen Yuan* 崇文院 (Chongwen Academy of Classical Learning),<sup>8</sup> and Li Fang was summoned to the academy to chair the compilation of TPYL, TPGJ, and WYYH.

According to the *Song Huiyao* 宋會要 (Collected Rules and Regulations of the Song Dynasty), the compilation of TPGJ got started under the imperial decree in the third month of the second year of the Taiping Xingguo Period (977), and lasted until the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the following year when Li Fang submitted "Taiping Guangji Biao" 太平廣記表 (A Report on TPGJ to the Throne).<sup>9</sup> It was not until the sixth year of the Taiping Xingguo Period (981) that TPGJ was carved onto wood blocks. However, it was then "kept in Taiqing Tower due to the then lack of any pressing academic need for it to be printed" (*fei hou xue suo ji shou ban zhu zhi Taiqing Lou* 非後學所急 收板貯之太清樓).<sup>10</sup> However, this carved-wood-block copy of TPGJ soon found its way out of the tower into the hands of people who either read it for fun or for inspiration for their own stories. As recorded in *Juan 2* of *Mozhuang Manlu* 墨莊漫錄 (Casual Notes from Mo Village) by the Southern Song scholar Zhang Bangji 張邦基, when his brother came to visit him at night, they would talk about strange happenings recorded in TPGJ for entertainment. Luo Ye 羅燁, a Southern Song *xiaoshuo* writer, admitted in "Zuiweng Tanlu Shengeng Xuyin" 醉翁談錄舌耕敘引 (Preface to *Collected Talks of Old Drunkard*) that he "studied TPGJ at a young age... and there were none of the items in YJZ that had not been

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<sup>8</sup> Chongwen Academy was a Song academic institution which served both as an imperial library and a block-printing centre of the empire.

<sup>9</sup> For this record quoted in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2955.

<sup>10</sup> This account, which was made by the Southern Song scholar Wang Yinglin 王應麟 in *Juan 54* of his *Yu Hai*, has long been accepted as true. However, demonstrated by the fact that TPGJ was listed in the two most influential unofficially annotated catalogue books of the Southern Song dynasty, namely, JZDSZ and SLJT, and that in *Juan 2* of *Junzhai Dushu Hou Zhi* 郡齋讀書後志 (An Addendum to the *Annotated Catalogue of Books at Junzhai Study*), this work is referred to as sources for *Lu Ge Hua Lei* 鹿革畫類 in 30 *juan* and *Lu Ge Wen Lei* 鹿革文類 in 30 *juan*, both of which were *xiaoshuo* collections compiled towards the end of the Northern Song dynasty by Cai Fan 蔡蕃, this work seems to have enjoyed a wide circulation through private hands among intellectuals during the Southern Song dynasty.

read (*you xi Taiping Guangji...Yijian Zhi wu you bu lan* 幼習太平廣記……夷堅志無有不覽).<sup>11</sup>

Popular as it was then with scholars and *xiaoshuo* writers, this Song block-printed edition did not survive.<sup>12</sup> For long, TPGJ had been circulated mostly in the form of hand-copied transcripts until the 45<sup>th</sup> year of the Jiaqing 嘉靖 period of the Ming dynasty (1566) when Tan Kai 談愷, a native of Wuxi 無錫, made a collation of all the transcripts available to him and printed this collated version on carved wood blocks, as noted in "Taiping Guangji Xu" 太平廣記序 (Preface to *Extensive Records of the Taiping Period*).<sup>13</sup> The several versions of TPGJ in current circulation are all, more or less, reproduced from this edition known as *Tan Ke Ben* 談刻本 (The Tan Carved-wood-block Copy of TPGJ).<sup>14</sup>

For a long time, TPGJ was held in high regard only for its preservation of non-official and unorthodox materials for men of letters of later dynasties to refer to, as ZMTY says: "Although this book is mostly devoted to accounts of spirits and strange happenings, the rich and various quotations and extracts taken from ancient books together with the abundant references and allusions made to famous people and events in it provide inexhaustible resources for poets and essayists to draw on." (*qi shu sui duo tan shenguai caizhi fanfu mingwu diangu cuo chu qi jian cizhangjia heng suo qu zi* 其書雖多談神怪採摭繁富名物典故錯出其間詞章家恆所取資)<sup>15</sup>

From the point of view of literary history, however, TPGJ is first and foremost a collection of ancient Chinese works of fiction, and its importance lies chiefly in its preservation of ancient tales and stories, which may otherwise have been lost. Most of the cited works were conventionally classified as "yishi zalu" 野史雜錄 (unofficial history and miscellaneous records), and having been treated with contempt and carelessness, hardly any of them survived in the original. Works cited

<sup>11</sup> *Zuiweng Tanlu* is a collection of stories and miscellaneous writings, most of which are rewritten or simply quoted from previous works. For Luo's preface, see Ding Xigen (1996: 586).

<sup>12</sup> The extant version closest to the original one is a Ming edition collated by the Qing scholar Chen Zhan 陳鱣 based on an abridged Song edition, as noted in the "Chuban Shuming" 出版說明 (explanatory remarks on the publication) of the 1990 edition of TPGJ published by Shanghai Guji Chubanshe. It is this 1990 version of TPGJ that I refer to throughout this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> For Tan's preface, see Ding Xigen (1996: 1770-1771).

<sup>14</sup> Versions of TPGJ available to us now are all reproduced in one way or another from the *Tan Ke Ben*, including the SKQS copy, a facsimile edition of which was published by Shanghai Guji Chubanshe in 1990.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2955- 2956.

in TPGJ date from pre-Han up to early Song times and amount to three hundred and forty-four.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of TPGJ in Chinese literature lies not only in its preservation of ancient *xiaoshuo* writings but also in its unique *xiaoshuo* classificatory system. With nearly seven thousand entries included in five hundred *juan*, TPGJ boasts the largest collection of classical Chinese fiction ever seen. Cited from various sources of different periods of time and covering a wide range of subject matters, these entries presented a great challenge to its compilers. Rather than follow the traditional classificatory system adopted in the catalogue books of official histories since Ban Gu, they developed a more measurable and operable classification of the *xiaoshuo*. In this system, it is not stylistic features, nor authorship and dating, but subject matter alone that counts as criteria for entry classification.

TPGJ is first divided into ninety-one major types by subject matter, and under them, entries are further divided into more than one hundred and fifty sections with subheadings attached to each section, denoting their specific theme and content.<sup>17</sup> This arrangement of entries marks a great breakthrough in classification of literary works in the history of Chinese literature. It not only avoids the problem with the traditional catalogue system of official history confusing stylistic features with subject matters, but also makes it much easier for readers to locate an individual entry.

TPGJ is essentially a collection of tales of the strange and supernatural. Of all the five hundred *juan* in TPGJ, more than four hundred and twenty *juan* are devoted to accounts of the strange and supernatural.<sup>18</sup> The *zhiguai* entries quoted in TPGJ cover an extremely extensive range of subject matter. They are arranged into four major groups: *dao* 道 (Daoism), *shi* 釋 (Buddhism), *wu* 巫 (shamanism), and *guai* 怪

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<sup>16</sup> Based on the wood-block printed copy by Huang Sheng 黃晟, the Qing scholar Deng Siyu 鄧嗣禹 made a list in his "TPGJ Yinshu Yinde" 太平廣記引書引得 (An Index to Works Quoted in TPGJ) of three hundred and forty-three works which are cited in TPGJ, while ZMTY asserts that works cited in TPGJ add up to three hundred and forty-five titles. A close check of "Yinyong Shumu" 引用書目 (A List of Works Cited) in the 1990 Shanghai edition of TPGJ, however, shows a total of 344. For the "Yinyong Shumu" and "Yinshu Yinde", see Vol. 1 of TPGJ, pp. 2-4, and Vol. 4 of TPGJ, pp. 1-43.

<sup>17</sup> In a note made in *Juan* 54 of *Yu Hai* to TPGJ, Wang Yinglin seems to have confused TPGJ with TPYL when claiming that TPGJ is divided into fifty-five groups. This account was accepted without reservation by Tan Kai, Ji Yun and Lu Xun, as shown in Ding Xigen (1996: 1770), Lu Xun (1981: 99), and Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2955.

<sup>18</sup> In TPGJ, only *Juan* 164-202 and *Juan* 235-275 are devoted to accounts about men and the world, which have generally been categorized as *zhiren* fiction since Lu Xun (1924).



(strangeness). Entries with a Daoist origin are found mainly in *Juan* 1-86 of TPGJ, which includes:

1. "immortals" (*shenxian* 神仙) in 55 *juan*,
2. "female immortals" (*nüxian* 女仙) in 15 *juan*,
3. "Daoist magic" (*daoshu* 道術) in 5 *juan*,
4. "masters of esoteric techniques" (*fangshi* 方士) in 5 *juan*,
5. "extraordinary people" (*yiren* 異人) in 6 *juan*.

Tales dealing with Buddhist doctrines and miracles are mostly found in *Juan* 87-163, which includes:

1. "extraordinary Buddhist monks" (*viseng* 異僧) in 12 *juan*,
2. "Buddhist miracles" (*shizheng* 釋證) in 3 *juan*,
3. "karmic retribution" (*baoying* 報應) in 33 *juan*,
4. "omens" (*zhengying* 徵應) in 2 *juan*,
5. "predestination" (*dingshu* 定數) in 15 *juan*,
6. "divine inspiration" (*ganying* 感應) in 2 *juan*,
7. "prognostication" (*chenying* 讖應) in 1 *juan*.

Tales of this type are also found in *Juan* 375-388 of TPGJ, which includes:

8. "rising from the dead" (*zaisheng* 再生) in 12 *juan*, and
9. "becoming aware of one's previous life" (*wu qiansheng* 悟前生) in 2 *juan*.

Stories activated by shamanism are grouped primarily in *Juan* 267-374 of TPGJ, which includes:

1. "dreams" (*meng* 夢) in 7 *juan*,
2. "witchcraft" (*wu* 巫) in 1 *juan*,
3. "magic arts" (*huanshu* 幻術) in 4 *juan*,

4. "black magic" (*yaowang* 妖妄) in 3 *juan*,
5. "gods" (*shen* 神) in 25 *juan*,
6. "ghosts" (*gui* 鬼) in 40 *juan*,
7. "yaksha" (*yecha* 夜叉)<sup>19</sup> in 2 *juan*,
8. "souls and spirits" (*shen hun* 神魂) in 1 *juan*,
9. "demons and monsters" (*yaoguai* 妖怪) in 9 *juan*,
10. "goblins and spirits" (*jingguai* 精怪) in 6 *juan*, and
11. "marvels and mysteries" (*lingyi* 靈異) in 1 *juan*.

Most items grouped in *Juan* 389-392 of TPGJ, which includes "graves" (*zhongmu* 塚墓) in 2 *juan* and "inscriptions" (*mingji* 銘記), are also of strong shamanistic flavour.

Grouped in *Juan* 393-479 of TPGJ are entries which, although difficult to fit in with the above three classes, might be categorised as strange writings about natural and/or supernatural beings and happenings beyond human comprehension. Entries falling into this category in TPGJ are as follows:

1. "thunder" (*lei* 雷) in 3 *juan*,
2. "rain" (*yu* 雨) in 1 *juan*,
3. "mountains" (*shan* 山) in 1 *juan*,
4. "stones" (*shi* 石) in 1 *juan*,
5. "water" (*shui* 水) in 1 *juan*,
6. "treasures" (*bao* 寶) in 6 *juan*,
7. "grass and trees" (*caomu* 草木) in 12 *juan*,
8. "dragons" (*long* 龍) in 8 *juan*,
9. "tigers" (*hu* 虎) in 8 *juan*,
10. "domestic and wild animals" (*chu shou* 畜獸) in 13 *juan*,
11. "foxes" (*hu* 狐) in 9 *juan*,
12. "snakes" (*she* 蛇) in 4 *juan*,
13. "birds" (*niao* 鳥) in 4 *juan*,

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<sup>19</sup> The Chinese word *yecha* 夜叉 is derived from the Sanskrit *yaksha*, described in Chinese folklore as malevolent spirits with ghastly features.

14. "aquatic animals" (*shuizu* 水族) in 9 *juan*, and

15. "insects" (*kunchong* 昆蟲) in 7 *juan*.

Although TPGJ has long been held in high esteem for its unique contributions in the history of Chinese fiction, there are still problems with the compilation. For example, there are quite a few entries quoted with no acknowledgement of sources, some source information provided is inaccurate or ambiguous, and there are arbitrary alterations to the wording of entry titles and text.<sup>20</sup> However, "one flaw cannot mar the jade" as the Chinese saying goes, and these defects cannot in the least undermine TPGJ's position in the history of Chinese literature as "a vast sea of *xiaoshuo* writings" (*xiaoshuo zhi yuanghai* 小說之淵海).<sup>21</sup>

- Xu Xun and his *Jishen Lu*

The continuation and development of *zhiguai* literature under the Song is also reflected in the flourishing of publications of collections of tales of the supernatural. According to Yuan Xingpei and Hou Zhongyi (1981), about four hundred *xiaoshuo* works were produced during the Song dynasty, most of which are in the *biji* form. Around three fifths of the *biji* writings are accounts and tales about the strange and supernatural, and even in works generally classified as fiction about men and the world like *Tieweishan Congtan* 鐵圍山叢談 (Collected Talks from Tiewei Mountain)<sup>22</sup> and *Mengxi Bitan*,<sup>23</sup> a considerable number of items contain supernatural elements. Most well-known of the dozens of Song *zhiguai* collections extant today are *Jishen Lu* 稽神錄 (Records of Investigation into Spirits), *Jianghuai Yiren Lu* 江淮異人錄 (Records of Extraordinary People around the Yantze and Huai River Regions), *Maoting Kehua* 茅亭客話 (Sojourner's Tales from the Thatched

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<sup>20</sup> For a detailed discussion of the problems with TPGJ, see Ye Qingbing (1977: 11-43).

<sup>21</sup> This comment comes as part of an explanatory postscript to TPGJ in *Juan* 142 of ZMTY. For the whole text of this postscript, See Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2955-2956.

<sup>22</sup> This work in 6 *juan* was written by Cai Tao 蔡條 (fl. 1110) towards the end of the Northern Song after he was banished from court to Mout Tiewei in the Bobai 博白 area of present-day Guangxi.

<sup>23</sup> *Mengxi Bitan* in 26 *juan* was written by Shen Kuo after he retired from office and settled down in Mengxi, Runzhou 潤州, present-day Zhenjiang 鎮江 of Jiangsu province. Also see *Mengxi* at Note 51 of Chapter One.

Pavilion), *Qingsuo Gaoyi* 青鎖高議 (Noble Talks by the Green Latticed Window), and YJZ.

*Jishen Lu* was one of the earliest and best-known Song *zhiguai* collections. This work was written by Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916-991), whose courtesy name was Dingchen 鼎臣. Xu Xuan was a native of Guangling 廣陵 of Yangzhou 揚州 Prefecture in present-day Jiangsu Province, and he came to fame at an early age as a literary genius in the Jiangnan 江南 area. Before he submitted to the rule of the Song dynasty, he had been *Libu Shangshu* 吏部尚書 (Secretary of the Board of Civil Office) for Li Yu 李煜 (937-978), the last monarch of the Southern Tang 南唐 (937-975) dynasty. Out of admiration for his literary talent, the founder of Song summoned him to the newly-established Chongwen Academy to help with the collation of SWJZ, and also with the compilation of TPYL, TPGJ, and WYYH.<sup>24</sup>

*Jishen Lu* is listed as a collection of *zhiguai* tales in 10 *juan* in CWZM, JZDSZ, and SSYWZ,<sup>25</sup> but this 10-*juan* version did not survive beyond the Yuan dynasty.<sup>26</sup> A 6-*juan* version of this work is extant in SKQS.<sup>27</sup> As the title suggests, this collection is a record of investigation into the supernatural world, but Xu Xuan was more a recorder than an investigator in this process. As recorded in JZDSZ, Xu Xuan took in as a hanger-on a man by the name of Kuai Liang 蒯亮 for his tale-telling talents, and then composed written versions of Kuai's.<sup>28</sup> Xu Xuan began to compose items for *Jishen Lu* in the year of *yiwei* 乙未 (935 AD), and by the year of *yimao*

<sup>24</sup> For the biography of Xu Xuan in *Juan* 441 of the *Song Shi*, see Toktoghan (1976: 13044-13045).

<sup>25</sup> For the record of this work in CWZM, JZDSZ, and SSYWZ, see Vol. 001 of GJCS, p. 161; Vol. 002 of GJCS pp. 247-248, and Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 86.

<sup>26</sup> The Qing scholar Xia Jingguan 夏敬觀 conjectures in his "*Jishen Lu* Ba" 稽神錄跋 (Afterword to *Jishen Lu*) that there existed three different versions of *Jishen Lu* during the Song dynasty, one in 6 *juan* with 150 items composed before 955 AD incorporated in it as stated in Xu Xuan's preface, another in 10 *juan* with the items in the 6-*juan* version together with items composed after 955 incorporated in it, which is referred to as "the original version" (*yuan ben* 元本) in SLJT, and SSYWZ, and the third one with all the items included in one *juan*, which Chen Zhensun is quoted as claiming in his SLJT to have been compiled from other books, and that it is this one-*juan* version that was later divided into 6 *juan* to fit in with the *juan* number of this work as recorded by Chen Zhensun in his SLJT. For Xia's account of three different versions of *Jishen Lu* in his "Afterword", see Ding Xigen (1996: 82-84).

<sup>27</sup> *Jishen Lu* is listed in 6 *juan* in both SLJT and ZMTY, the latter of which states that the present version of this work has 174 items in it, with 13 items attached to it as supplied omissions, and that this version does not agree with Chao's [JZDSZ] either in the number of *juan* or in the number of entries." For the entry of *Jishen Lu* in JZDSZ, SLJT, and ZMTY, see Vol. 002 of GJCS, pp. 247-248, Vol. 003/GJCS, p. 328, and Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2954.

<sup>28</sup> See Vol. 002 of GJCS, p. 248.

乙卯 (955 AD), he had got 150 items, as noted in his preface.<sup>29</sup> After submitting to the Song regime, he continued with this work, making alterations to reign and addressing titles of past dynasties, adding newly-written items to his collection, and incorporating them into TPGJ with the consent of the compiler-in-chief, Li Fang.<sup>30</sup>

Xu Xuan devoted this collection to "records of the strange and supernatural" (*ji guai shen zhi shi* 記怪神之事)<sup>31</sup> not for the promotion of a certain religious belief but out of his personal interest in the supernatural world. As noted by Yang Danian 楊大年 in "Yang Wengong Tanyuan" 楊文公談苑 (The Talk Garden of Yang Wengong), "Xu Xuan did not believe in Buddhism but had a deep love for tales about ghosts and spirits...absorbed in search for accounts of ghosts and spirits, he jotted them down and collected them into *Jishen Lu*" (*Xu Xuan bu xin fo er kuhao guishen zhi shuo...zhuan souqiu shenguai zhi shi, ji yu jiandu yiwei Jishen Lu* 徐鉉不信佛而酷好鬼神之說...專搜求神怪之事記於簡牘以為稽神錄).<sup>32</sup> Besides the stories he heard from Kuai Liang, his other stories were either derived from folklore, or told to him by his friends and relatives,<sup>33</sup> or reproduced from ancient books.<sup>34</sup>

A distinctive feature about ghost stories in *Jishen Lu* is that ghosts in this work are usually described as honest, helpful, kind-hearted, and approachable, rather than evil, ugly and ferocious as we have seen in some of the earlier ghost stories. "Wang Pan" 王攀<sup>35</sup> tells of a famous doctor losing his way after getting drunk and running into a ghost who kindly accommodates him for the night and sends him off on the way back. The story "Tian Dacheng" 田達誠<sup>36</sup> gives a vivid account of a ghost putting up in Tian's house after his tomb is washed away in a flood and living peacefully with the household.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in TPGJ are 221 items with *Jishen Lu* listed as the source.

<sup>31</sup> For this comment made by Chao Gongwu in JZDSZ, see Vol. 002 of GJCS, p. 248.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Miao Zhuan (1998: 197)

<sup>33</sup> Items of this type are usually given with their sources acknowledged.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the tale in *Jishen Lu* entitled "Wangjiang Li Ling" 望江李令 (Magistrate Li of Wang Jiang County) is the same story as "Qing Jubo" 秦巨伯 from Gan Bao's SSJ, both of which are adapted from an earlier account of "Liqui Qigui" in *Lüshi Chunqiu*. See "Liqui Qi Gui" at Note 26 of Chapter Two. A story about a corrupt ghost tax collector in the nether world entitled "Seng Minchu" 僧岷楚 (Monk Minchu) in *Jishen Lu* is obviously retold from "Lüsheng Shi" 掠剩使 (A Ghost Tax Collector) in *Xuanguai Lu* by Niu Sengru.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 355 of TPGJ.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 354 of TPGJ.

In sharp contrast with the ghosts and spirits in the above stories are morally degenerated human beings, this constituting another feature of *Jishen Lu*. The story "Lü Shizao" 呂師造<sup>37</sup> tells of an avaricious, corrupt official unscrupulously accumulating wealth and ending up with his dirty money burnt to ashes by a Daoist with magic power. In items like "Facao Li" 法曹吏 (A Judicial Officer), "Liu Cun" 劉存, "Liu Fan" 劉璠, "Chen Xun" 陳勳, and "Zhong Zun" 鐘遵, etc., one can read stories about soldiers, minor officers, monks, women, and robbers who fall victim to social injustice. They, however, refuse to reconcile themselves to the wrong done to them, and after they die a wronged death, their ghosts and spirits take revenge on the persecutors, and bring them to justice.<sup>38</sup>

Of those items originating from folklore, probably the best known is the story "Shi Huangjing" 食黃精 (Feeding on Huangjing).<sup>39</sup> In this story, a maidservant, unable to bear her master's inhumane treatment, runs away from the house and flees to a mountain. After years of feeding on the roots of a kind of magic plant known as *huangjing*,<sup>40</sup> one day she suddenly finds herself able to rise and fly like a bird. Her carefree life in the mountain soon comes to an end when she is caught by a trick and brought back to her master, who forces her into revealing the magic effect of the herbs, and torments her to death after her failure to get him the magic herbs.

Stylistically, items in *Jishen Lu* read smoothly and tend to be brief and concise, running no more than twenty lines.<sup>41</sup> Brief and simple as they are, the writings are never short of meaning. This simple yet pithy style together with skilled metaphorical references to reality distinguishes *Jishen Lu* as the most important *zhiguai* work during the transitional period from the Tang to the Song dynasty.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 367 of TPGJ.

<sup>38</sup> Stories of this type from *Jishen Lu* are mostly quoted in *Juan* 124 of TPGJ.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Juan* 414 of TPGJ.

<sup>40</sup> *Huangjing*, also called *jiuhuang cao* 救荒草, has a certain medical effect, an earlier record of which is found in *Bowu Zhi*.

<sup>41</sup> As to his style, Lu Xun comments (1981: 100): "[His writings] are rather vapid and skimpy, lacking the classical simplicity of the Six Dynasties tales and devoid of the romantic flavor of the Tang *chuanqi* stories." (*Qi wen pingshi jianshuai, ji shi Liuchao zhiguai zhi guzhi, fu wu tangren chuanqi zhi chanmian* 其文平實簡率，即失六朝志怪之古質，復無唐人傳奇之纏綿。). This comment, however, is true only regarding the absence in it of the sentimentality and romanticism popular in Tang stories. The use of plain, and simple language, and adoption of terse and pithy narration distinguishes Xu Xuan as a mature *guwen* stylist. Rather than lacking the classical simplicity, his writings are actually a continuation and development of the *zhiguai* style of the Six Dynasties.



*Jianghuai Yiren Lu* was another influential *zhiguai* collection of the early Song. Wu Shu 吳淑 (947-1002), the author of this work, whose courtesy name was Zhengyi 正儀, was a native of Danyang 丹陽, at present-day Zhenjiang. He passed the highest imperial civil service examination and obtained his *Jinshi* title under the Southern Tang. After the fall of the Southern Tang regime, he was summoned together with his father-in-law, Xu Xuan, to the Song court to help compile TPYL, TPGJ, and WYYH.

The earliest record of *Jianghuai Yiren Lu* is found in the "Weishi" 偽史 (Fabricated History) section of SLJT, where it is described as containing two *juan*.<sup>42</sup> Later, this work is listed in SSYWZ as composed of three *juan*,<sup>43</sup> and a record of this work in three *juan* is also found in "The Biography of Wu Shu" in Section Three of "Wenyuan" 文苑 (The Garden of Arts and Literature), *Juan* 441 of *Song Shi*.<sup>44</sup> Neither the two-*juan* version nor the three-*juan* one of this work survived in the original beyond the Yuan dynasty. Fortunately, this work was preserved in fragments in *Yongle Dadian* 永樂大典 (The Yongle Canon), from which twenty-five entries were extracted and collected into a two-*juan* work in SKQS.<sup>45</sup>

Each of the twenty-five surviving items tells a story about an "extraordinary person" (*yiren* 異人), who is either a magician, a Daoist master, a child genius, or a chivalrous man or woman. Twenty-three stories have their settings in the Southern Tang period, and the other two in the Tang era. The subjects are called "*yiren*" because they usually behave in a weird, enigmatic way. Although they are not supernatural beings, each of them is described as possessing a consummate skill in, say, exorcising evil spirits, becoming invisible in the blink of an eye, or covering one thousand *li* in one day, and so on. They work wonders while performing chivalrous

<sup>42</sup> See Vol. 003 of GJCS, p. 129.

<sup>43</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 87.

<sup>44</sup> See Toktoghan (1976: 13040-13041).

<sup>45</sup> ZMTY claims that twenty-five entries are taken from *Yongle Dadian* and rearranged into a two-*juan* work to keep in line with the *juan* number recorded in SSYWZ, which, however, gives this work in three *juan* rather than two *juan*. For the explanatory postscript to *Jianghuai Yiren Lu* in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2955.

conduct, demonstrating a strong sense of justice and loyalty, as is represented by "Hongzhou Shusheng" 洪州書生 (A Scholar of Hongzhou).<sup>46</sup> He appears to be no more than a scholar, but is actually a "yiren" in possession of the magic power to pass through walls, and at times of crisis, he unhesitatingly exercises his power to punish the evil and help the needy.

Stories about "yiren" can be traced back to the historical accounts of "yimin" 異民 (eccentric people) in *Zhou Li* 周禮 (The Zhou Canon of Rites), and "cike" 刺客 (assassins) and "fangshi" in the *Shi Ji*, as is noted in ZMTY.<sup>47</sup> This tradition was continued into the Tang dynasty, which witnessed a great revival of interest in accounts of chivalrous conduct and magic skill. A good of example is *Youyang Zazu*, where Duan Chengshi devoted two chapters to anecdotes of "guai shu" 怪術 (extraordinary skills) and "daoxia" 盜俠 (chivalrous robbers).<sup>48</sup>

Wu Shu inherited this tradition and carried it forward to a new height. Before him, *zhiguai* writers tended to have both accounts about supernatural ghosts and spirits or gods and immortals, and tales about human beings with magic skills mixed together in one collection without making a distinction between the supernatural and the superhuman. Wu Shu, however, was unique in that he devoted his *Jianghuai Yiren Lu* exclusively to tales of extraordinary people, and combined descriptions of their consummate skills with vivid accounts of their chivalrous and picaresque performance. His influence upon writers of later generations is well represented in the Qing *xiayi xiaoshuo* 俠義小說 (stories of knights-errant), and can even be found in present-day *wuxia xiaoshuo* 武俠小說 (martial arts-themed romantic fiction).

- Huang Xiufu and his *Maoting Kehua*

In the middle of the Northern Song dynasty, there appeared dozens of works of supernatural fiction, but many of them were lost. Extant today are *Kuoyi Zhi* 括異志 (Records of Searches for the Strange), *Soushen Milan* 搜神秘覽 (Secret Investigations into Gods and Spirits), *Yunzhai Guanglu* 雲齋廣錄 (Extensive Records from the Cloudy Cottage), *Maoting Kehua*, *Qingsuo Gaoyi*, etc., of which

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Vol. 250 of GJCS, p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> See Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2955.

<sup>48</sup> See Duan Chengshi at Notes 44 and 48 of Chapter One.

the last two are best known for their rich imagination and beautiful description of the relationships of men to supernatural beings.

*Maoting Kehua* in ten *juan* was written by Huang Xiufu 黃休復, whose courtesy name was Guiben 歸本, a native of Jiangxia 江夏, present-day Wuchang 武昌 of Hubei province. When young, he left his hometown and settled down in Chengdu 成都. Huang Xiufu was a scholar with a wide range of interests. He was well versed in the Confucian classics, and made collations of the *Zuo Zhuan*, *Gongyang Zhuan*, and *Guliang Zhuan*. In addition, he was skilled in Daoist arts, and was an accomplished painter. Attributed to him was *Yizhou Minghua Lu* 益州名畫錄 (A Collection of Yizhou Famous Paintings) in three *juan*, to which there was a preface written by Li Tian 李旼 in 1036, the third year of Jingyou 景祐 (1034-1038).<sup>49</sup>

*Maoting Kehua* is a collection of tales and accounts of strange happenings and miraculous signs dated from the State of Former Shu 前蜀 (907-925) during the Five Dynasties to the Period of Tianxi 天禧 (1017-1021) under the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 of the Song dynasty. As noted in JZDSZ, "Maoting was his dwelling house, where guests talked about imaginative and fantastic happenings, related folk tales and customs, and told fortunes at their leisure. Although what they talked about was heterodox, it fit in with Daoist doctrines. Everything concerning rewards for doing good and punishments for doing evil would be recorded" (*Maoting qi suo ju ye xiari binke huayan xuwu bianhua yaosu bushi sui yiduan er he daozi shu chengquan zhe jie lu zhi* 茅亭其所居也暇日賓客話言虛無變化謠俗卜筮雖異端而合道旨屬懲勸者皆錄之).<sup>50</sup> As a Daoist follower and practitioner, however, Huang Xiufu showed his major interest in "the art of making and taking pills of immortality and Daoist breathing exercises, and the enumeration of Daoist miraculous signs, to which more than half of this work is devoted" (*lun shaolian fuer daoyin zhi shu lulie daoia ling ji zhe ju quan shu zhi da ban* 論燒煉服餌導引之術臚列道家靈蹟者居全書之大半).<sup>51</sup> Stories of this type are best reflected in "Chezhe

<sup>49</sup> For more about the dating and authorship of this work, see Vol. 003 of GJCS, p. 394, Vol. 006 of GJCS, pp. 2330-233, Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2956-2957, and Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 111.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Vol. 002 of GJCS, pp. 156-157.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2956.

Ji" 車轍蹟 (The Ruts),<sup>52</sup> and "Wangtai Miao" 王太廟 (The Imperial Ancestral Temple).<sup>53</sup>

"Chezhe Ji" is about a Daoist master rising into Heaven and becoming an immortal after many years of practice. The story itself is rather simple and there is nothing new revealed about the theme of practising Daoism and rising to Heaven. What is interesting in it, however, is the rich and colourful presentation of rituals and melodies accompanying the rise of men up to Heaven. "Wangtai Miao" is a story told to advocate the magic effect of the elixir of life made by a Daoist preacher, whose pills can not only give immortality, but can also be changed into gold when mixed with mercury. Generally speaking, his Daoist stories are rather boring and monotonous because of their strong didactic inclination. The worthiest part of this collection is those stories set in the countryside and adapted from folklore and local legends.

As the author lived for a long time in Chengdu, and was familiar with the Shu 蜀 social customs and folklore, his writings of the strange and supernatural are usually embedded with beautiful and intoxicating descriptions of the countryside of this area, best reflected in "Lushui Xi She" 鹿水溪蛇 (A Snake in Lushui Stream),<sup>54</sup> "Cimu Chi" 慈母池 (The Loving-Mother Pond),<sup>55</sup> and "Cai Gouqi" 採枸杞 (Picking the Fruit of *Gouqi*),<sup>56</sup> The story "Lushui Xi She" tells of a buffalo boy coming across a big snake on his way home after a heavy rain. At the sight of the snake winding its way through a muddy stream into a hole with hundreds of small snakes following behind in a line, the boy is literally dumbfounded, and cannot open his mouth until the following spring. Huang's deep love for nature and his talent for literature are fully expressed in "Cimu Chi", where he presents to us a wonderland of peace and beauty through his delicate, colourful description of a pond far from the madding crowd.

"Cai Gouqi" tells of a village man by the name of Duan Jiu obtaining on a mountain an animal-like *gouqi* plant with two stems looking like an animal's head

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 918-919.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 932-933.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, p. 958.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 940-941.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 932-933. *Gouqi* is a plant peculiar to China, which yields reddish wolfberry-like fruit known in traditional Chinese medicine as *gouqizi* 枸杞子.

and tail, and four roots like its four legs. When he brings the rare plant home, dogs from the surrounding villages gather together in front of his house barking day and night until his wife, who cannot bear the noise any longer, throws the plant for them to eat. The legend has it that this animal-like *gouqi* is a rare plant and whoever eats it will enjoy a long and healthy life in the immortal world. Although Duan is lucky enough to get such a rare plant, he fails to keep it for himself simply because of his own ignorance and his wife's stupidity. It turns out that it is the barking dogs rather than the husband and wife that will rise into heaven and become immortals, thus giving the story an ironical yet comical ending.

Romantic encounters between men and female supernatural beings are a constant theme in classical Chinese supernatural fiction, whose tradition can be traced back to the item "Jiang Fei" in *Liexian Zhuan*.<sup>57</sup> The best-known story of this type from this work is "Gou Sheng" 勾生 (Scholar Gou).<sup>58</sup> The story has it that one day a young man named Gou is wandering about in a temple with his friends when he catches sight of a heavenly girl painted in a mural of the temple. Infatuated with her, he cannot but scratch a piece off the wall painting and put it into his mouth. His crazy love moves the goddess to come down off the painting at night and make love to him. Unfortunately, their affair is soon found out by Gou's uncle, a Daoist hermit, who, believing that his nephew has been possessed by an evil spirit, comes to his help by offering him pills to resist the temptation of the spirit. Under pressure, Gou takes the medicine, and dies heartbroken within a month, thus leaving this love story with a tragic ending.

- Liu Fu and his *Qingsuo Gaoyi*

Xu Xuan and Wu Shu carried forward the *zhiguai* tradition from the Five Dynasties into the Song dynasty, and with *Jishen Lu* and *Jianghuai Yiren Lu* they opened the first chapter of a new era of *zhiguai* literature. After that, *zhiguai* writing entered a short period of hibernation until the appearance in the middle of the Northern Song

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<sup>57</sup> See "Jiang Fei" at Note 28 of Chapter Two.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1042 of SKQS, pp. 935-936.



dynasty of *Shengyi Ji* 乘異記 (Historical Records of the Strange),<sup>59</sup> *Kuoyi Zhi*,<sup>60</sup> and *Maoting Kehua*. The upward trend of *zhiguai* production continued and towards the end of the dynasty reached its climax with the appearance of *Qingsuo Gaoyi* by Liu Fu 劉斧 (fl.1090), a milestone in the history of Chinese fiction.

*Qingsuo Gaoyi* is listed in SSYWZ<sup>61</sup>, JZDSZ<sup>62</sup>, and *Jiangyunlou Shumu* 絳雲樓書目 (The Catalogue Book of the Crimson Cloudy Tower, hereafter JYLSM)<sup>63</sup> as comprising 18 *juan*, but 20 *juan* in ZMTY.<sup>64</sup> This 18-*juan* version of *Qingsuo Gaoyi* did not survive in the original. Part of it was preserved in *leishu* like the *Leishuo* and *Ganzhu Ji* 紺珠集 (Collected Purple Pearls). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there appeared a version of *Qingsuo Gaoyi* known as "Dong's Songfeng Tower Block-printed Edition" (*dongshi songfenlou keben* 董氏誦芬樓刻本) made by Dong Kang 董康.<sup>65</sup> An unabridged version of this work in 27 *juan* was published in 1983 by Shanghai Gudian Wenxue Chubanshe 上海古典文學出版社, and included by Zhou Guangpei 周光培 in *Songdai Biji Xiaoshuo* 宋代筆記小說 (The Note-Jotting Form Fiction of the Song Dynasty).<sup>66</sup> This 27-*juan* version is composed of three parts: "the former collection" (*qianji* 前集) in ten *juan*, "the latter collection" (*houji* 後集) in ten *juan*, and "the supplementary collection" (*bieji* 別集) in seven *juan*. It

<sup>59</sup> Attributed to Zhang Junfang 張君房 (fl. 1020), the compiler of YJQQ, *Sheng Yiji* was lost around the Yuan and extant are only a few items quoted in the *Leishuo*.

<sup>60</sup> Listed as authored by Zhang Shizheng 張師正 (1016-?), and containing 250 items in JZDSZ, this ten-*juan* work does not come down to us in the original. Extant in *Sibu Congkan Xubian* 四部叢刊續編 (A Continuation to the Compilation of *Collectanea in Four Divisions*) is a version of this work reprinted from a Ming copy, still in ten *juan* but with only 123 items included in it.

<sup>61</sup> SSYWZ lists this work with Liu Fu as the compiler, to whom *Hanfu Mingtan* 翰府名談 (High-brow Talk from the Royal Academy) in 25 *juan*, and *Zhiyi* 摭遺 (More Tales Retold) in 20 *juan* are ascribed. See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> Different from SSYWZ, there is no mention in JZDSZ of the author except for a brief description of this work as "a collection of anecdotes of the Song dynasty, and chronicles written by eminent men of letters." (*zai huangchao zashi ji mingshi suo zhuanji* 載皇朝雜事及名士所撰記). See Vol. 002 of GJCS, pp. 260-261.

<sup>63</sup> In JYLSM, *Qingshuo Gaoyi* is listed as a work of unknown authorship, filled with records of miscellaneous happenings mainly of the Song dynasty. The version of JYLSM I refer to throughout this thesis is the one reprinted in Vol. 005 of GJCS. For this account, see Vol. 005 of CSJCJB, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup> ZMTY suspects that tales from other sources were later added to the 18-*juan* *Qingsuo Gaoyi* as a result of numerous reproductions, hence the 20-*juan* copy. See Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2995-2996.

<sup>65</sup> This edition was a collated edition of "the hand-written copy made by Shiliju Printing House" (*shiliju xieben* 士禮居寫本), which was included in the *Shiliju Collectanea* (*Shiliju Congshu* 士禮居叢書) compiled by Huang Pili 黃丕列 (1763-1825).

<sup>66</sup> The version of *Qingsuo Gaoyi* I hereafter refer to when discussing a particular item is the one included in the *Songdai Biji Xiaoshuo* published by Hebei Education Press 河北教育出版社 in 1995.



includes 146 items in total, 37 more than in Dong's wood-block printed copy, and is the most complete extant edition of *Qingshuo Gaoyi*.

About Liu Fu, little is known to us. According to the preface to this work by Sun Fushu 孫副樞,<sup>67</sup> Liu Fu was a scholar without an official title,<sup>68</sup> and had lived in Bianjing 汴京, present-day Kaifeng of Henan Province, which was the Northern Song capital, before he went down to the south to pay a visit to Sun Fushu in Hangzhou to ask him to write a preface to *Qingshuo Gaoyi*. It is inferred from some of the items written by Liu Fu in this work that he lived through four reigns of the Northern Song dynasty, respectively those of Renzong 仁宗 (1023-1063), Yingzong 英宗 (1064-1067), Shenzong 神宗 (1068-1085), and Zhezong 哲宗 (1086-1100), and that the former collection was brought to completion during the Period of Xining 熙寧 (1068-1078), and the latter no earlier than the Period of Yuanyou 元祐 (1086-1093).

*Qingshuo Gaoyi* is the best-known collection of tales of the Northern Song dynasty for its rich variety of themes and styles. Included in this collection are both short anecdotes and long sophisticated narratives: jottings and accounts about men and the world and tales and stories about the strange and supernatural. This variety in theme and style results from the great diversity of sources Liu Fu drew on while compiling this collection. In terms of authorship, items in it can be divided into three groups: tales by various Song writers,<sup>69</sup> tales adapted by Liu Fu from earlier sources, and tales written by Liu Fu himself. For the adaptations and for some of the unattributed tales, Liu himself was probably in part or wholly responsible.

The items collected into this work are grouped roughly according to theme, and each tale has a subtitle of seven characters in the form of a line of verse, reminiscent of the couplet, "timu" 題目 (topic) or "zhengming" 正名 (vindicating names), attached at the end of Yuan dramas.<sup>70</sup> The written language, generally speaking, is crude and rustic, suggesting the strong influence of the colloquial language widely

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 574-575).

<sup>68</sup> Liu Fu is addressed as "Liu Fu Xiucai" in the preface. In pre-Ming China a scholar who held no official position could be referred to as *xiucai* 秀才, a term used in Ming and Qing dynasties to refer to a successful candidate of the imperial civil service examination at the county level.

<sup>69</sup> Ten of the 146 items in the 27-juan version are given with the name of their original author mentioned.

<sup>70</sup> Lu Xun (1981: 119) believes that this practice originated with Song *huaben* popular at the story-telling markets in Bianjing.

employed by Song story-tellers (*shuoshuren* 說書人), but they are not *huaben*, for they were composed not for people to tell but for them to read. The use of plain literary language and the attachment of a seven-character subtitle to each story in *Qingsuo Gaoyi* are probably part of Liu Fu's efforts to reach a wider audience for his tales by imitating the art of telling stories popular in the Northern Song capital. It is for this that *Qingsuo Gaoyi* is to be remembered as one of the earliest forms of *ni huaben* 擬話本 (imitation *huaben*)<sup>71</sup> in the history of Chinese literature.

As mentioned above, the items in *Qingsuo Gaoyi* come from different sources and hands and range widely in theme and content. What interests us most is the stories of the supernatural, which make up the bulk of this collection. There are tales about foxes, dragons, and ghosts. Among them, the most note-worthy are stories dealing with relationships between men and animals, and between men and supernatural beings. "Dong Xun" 東巡 (On an Inspection Tour of the East)<sup>72</sup> is a good example of this type of story. This story tells how, in order to make way for Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 on his tour of inspection, bears, tigers, jackals, and leopards are all driven deep into mountains, and snakes and scorpions for 500 *li* around are overpowered into submission. Related from a human-centred perspective, this story demonstrates to the full mankind's ambition to achieve complete control and dominance over nature.

"Da Yan Shi" 大眼師 (The Big-Eyed Master)<sup>73</sup> is a story about a monk who possesses "the secret magic arts from Heaven" (*jiutian mifa* 九天秘法) and can see through human nature. Seen with eyes washed by the magic water known as the "five-brightness water" (*wuming shu* 五明水), nine out of ten people at the market turn out to be strange creatures with human heads and animal paws or hoofs. In the monk's eyes, human beings are not by nature superior to animals, so he chooses to

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<sup>71</sup> *Ni huaben* refers to a *xiaoshuo* genre, which gained popularity during the Yuan dynasty and reached its climax during the Ming dynasty. Most representative of *ni-huaben* fiction are Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) *San Yan* 三言 (The Three Yan), which is a general term for his three collections of *ni-huaben* stories: *Yushi Mingyan* 喻世明言 (Stories to Enlighten the World), *Jingshi Tongyan* 警世通言 (Stories to Warn the World) and *Xingshi Hengyan* 醒世恆言 (Stories to Awaken the World), and Ling Mengchu's 凌濛初 (1580-1644) *Chu ke Paian Jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (Amazing Stories: First Series) and *Er ke Pai'an Jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (Amazing Stories: Second Series), which are conventionally known as *Er Pai* 二拍 (The Two Amazes).

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Zhou Guangpei (1995: 21/357).

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Zhou Guangpei (1995: 21/570-572).

leave this world and retire to high mountains surrounded solely by tigers, leopards, bears, and deer, with whom he can live peacefully and be friends.

In sharp contrast with the story "Dong Xun", where animals are treated with great contempt as inferior to us, they are seen in the eyes of "Da Yan Shi" to be, if not superior, not in the least inferior to human beings. Starting from this point, the author further calls on us to look upon the other beings as our equals and treat them well, for man can benefit eventually from his/her human way of dealing with them. Such a message is most effectively expressed in the story "Yi Yu Ji" 異魚記 (The Story of a Strange Fish).<sup>74</sup> In it, the author gives a vivid account of a female dragon caught in a fisherman's net with a human face and the body of a tortoise rewarding the benefactor who sets her free by asking someone at the market to sell him a large pearl at a tenth of its value. The most extraordinary thing about this story is that we find here a narrator, who, in contrast to the traditional story-teller, tries to show how the female dragon feels after being caught, and how the benefactor and his wife react to her requests, by a clever use of monologue and dialogue. Although it has not attained the fine craftsmanship and the subtle psychological probings of the modern short story, there have emerged in this tale elements of a mature narrative.

- Hong Mai and his *Yijian Zhi*

The fall of the Northern Song dynasty was not accompanied by a decline in literature and arts. In the fields of poetry and essays, few masterpieces were produced under the Southern Song, but important advances were made in the production and distribution of fictional works and dramas in the vernacular language, which from this time onwards occupied increasingly important positions in Chinese literature. Although the new era had fewer practitioners of literary language fiction, the *zhiguai* tradition did not come to a standstill. Rather it was carried another step forward.

During this period of time, there came out a number of influential works of supernatural fiction, and most representative of them are YJZ, *Kuiche Zhi* 睽車志

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Zhou Guangpei (1995: 21/471-472).

(Records of a Cart-load of Ghosts),<sup>75</sup> *Touxia Lu* 投轄錄 (Entertaining Tales for Guests at an Inn),<sup>76</sup> and *Gui Dong* 鬼董 (Historical Records of Ghosts).<sup>77</sup> Among them, YJZ by Hong Mai is best known as the most extensive *zhiguai* collection by a single scholar in the history of Chinese supernatural fiction.

The earliest record of this work is found in SLJT as being composed of "four record books" (*si zhi* 四志), namely, "The First Record Book" (*chu zhi* 初志), "The Branch Record Book" (*zhi zhi* 支志), "The Third Record Book" (*san zhi* 三志), and "The Fourth Record Book" (*si zhi* 四志).<sup>78</sup> Each of the four record books is further divided into numbered sections. Around six thousand items were included in this work, with "The First Record Book" containing 200 *juan* numbered from *Jia* 甲 to *Gui* 癸, the Branch Book 100 *juan* numbered from *zhijia* 支甲 to *zhigui* 支癸, the Third Record Book 100 *juan* numbered from *sanjia* 三甲 to *sangui* 三癸, and the Fourth Record Book 20 *juan* numbered from *sijia* 四甲 to *siyi* 四乙.<sup>79</sup> There was a preface to each of the record books except "The Fourth Record Book", which was left unfinished owing to the death of the author.<sup>80</sup>

This 420-*juan* work did not survive in its entirety to the Yuan dynasty, and as a result, it was recorded as containing only 120 *juan* in SSYWZ.<sup>81</sup> Besides the SKQS edition,<sup>82</sup> and the *Congshu Jicheng Chubian* 叢書集成初編 (The First Collection of Collectanea, hereafter CSJCCB) edition,<sup>83</sup> earlier versions of YJZ extant now are a facsimile edition of a Song hand-copied version and a wood-block printed copy

<sup>75</sup> This work, entitled *Kuiche Zhi* 睽車志 in allusion to "zaigui yiche" 載鬼一車 (a Cart-load of ghosts) in the "Kuigua" 睽卦 chapter, *Juan* 8 of the *Yi Jing* 易經 (The Book of Changes), is listed as authored by Guo Tuan 郭象 (1163-1189) in SLJT, and SSYWZ. For this allusion in the *Yi Jing*, see Vol. 029 of GJCS, p. 190.

<sup>76</sup> Written by Wang Mingqing, *Touxia Lu* in one *juan* containing 44 items is quoted in Vol. 1038 of SKQS as "miscellanies" (*zashi* 雜事) in the category of *xiaoshuo* writings.

<sup>77</sup> Written by an unknown author, *Gui Dong* in five *juan* is included in the *Shuo Ku* and also in Vol. 1266 of XXSKQS.

<sup>78</sup> See Vol. 003 of GJCS, pp. 324-325.

<sup>79</sup> This year-designating system is made up of "the Heavenly Stems" (*tiangan* 天干), and "the Earthly Branches" (*dizhi* 地支), from each of which two sets of signs are taken to form 60 pairs. The Heavenly Stems are put in the order of *jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, *wu* 戊, *ji* 己, *gen* 庚, *xin* 辛, *ren* 壬, and *gui* 癸, and the Earthly Branches put in the order of *zi* 子, *chou* 丑, *yin* 寅, *mao* 卯, *chen* 辰, *yi* 巳, *wu* 午, *wei* 未, *shen* 申, *you* 酉, *shu* 戌, and *hai* 亥.

<sup>80</sup> For a synoptic discussion in *Juan* 8 of *Bin Tui Lu* 賓退錄 (Notes Jotted Down after the Departure of Guests) of Hong Mai's 31 prefaces to YJZ, see Zhao Yushi 趙與時 (1983: 97-100).

<sup>81</sup> See Vol. 02 of CSJCJB, p. 86.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Vol. 1047 of SKQS is a 50-*juan* version of this work entitled *Yijian Zhi Zhi* 夷堅支志 (The Branch Record Book of YJZ), and a 180-*juan* edition is included in Vols. 1264-1266 of XXSKQS. For the explanatory postscripts to YJZ in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, pp. 2958-2959.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Vols. 2707-2714 of CSJCCB is an 80-*juan* edition of this work.

produced during the Period of Jiajing 嘉靖 (1522-1566) of the Ming dynasty.<sup>84</sup> The most complete YJZ available now is the 1981 Zhonghua Shuju edition, which is actually a collated version of the *Xinjiao Jibu Yijian Zhi* 新校輯補夷堅志 (*Yijian Zhi*: a Newly Collated and Compiled Edition) published by Hanfenlou 涵芬樓 Printing House affiliated to Shanghai Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館. Included in this 1981 edition are 206 *juan* with 28 items culled from *Yongle Dadian* attached as appendix, only half the size of the original copy.

Hong Mai, whose courtesy name was Jinglu 景廬, was also known by his literary name Rongzhai. He passed the imperial civil service examination in 1145, and was promoted to "Hanlin Xueshi" 翰林學士 (Fellow of the Royal Academy) in 1186. He was one of the most prolific Song writers, and wrote and compiled more than one thousand *juan* of works on a wide range of topics in his lifetime, many of which survived changes of dynasties owing to their literary and academic merits.<sup>85</sup> At the age of 80, he was honoured with the title of "Duanmingdian Xueshi" 端明殿學士 (Scholar of the Duanming Palace). Shortly afterwards, he died and was granted the posthumous title of "Wenmin" 文敏 (Literary Intelligence) for his literary achievements.<sup>86</sup>

On YJZ Hong Mai spent almost an entire lifetime. Beginning work on it at the age of 20, he continued regardless of any difficulty until his death at the age of 80. YJZ is a great collection of tales and accounts of the strange and supernatural dotted with historical notes and anecdotes. The title of this work originates from the "Tangwen" chapter in *Juan* 5 of the *Liezi*, where Yijian is referred to as the recorder who wrote down what the Great Yu saw and Boyi named into SHJ. (*Dayu xing er jian zhi Boyi zhi er ming zhi Yijian wen er zhi zhi* 大禹行而見之伯益知而名之夷堅聞而志之)<sup>87</sup> It is clear here that Hong Mai compared himself to Yijian, and his

<sup>84</sup> For a historical account of various editions of YJZ, see Fu Zengxiang 傅增湘 (1983: 791-792).

<sup>85</sup> Among his major works extant today are *Rongzhai Suibi* 容齋隨筆 (Random Jottings by Rongzhai), *Ye Chu Leigao* 野處類稿 (Classified Writings from the Wild Fields), *Wei Gao* 猥稿 (Miscellaneous Manuscripts), *Shiji Fayu* 史記法語 (The Cream of Historical Records), *Jingzi Fayu* 經子法語 (The Cream of the Classics), and *Wan Shou Tangren Jueju* 萬首唐人絕句 (Ten Thousand Tang Quatrains).

<sup>86</sup> For more about Hong Mai and his writings, see the entry of Hong Mai in *Juan* 373 of *Song Shi*, *Juan* 8 of *Bin Tui Lu* and "Hong Wenmin Gong Nianpu" 洪文敏公年譜 (The Chronological Life of the Revered Mr. Hong Wenmin) by Qian Daxin 錢大昕 (1999).

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Vol. 055 of GJCS, p. 62.



work to SHJ. Although SHJ and YJZ are both *zhiguai* works, they are quite different from each other not only in style but also in subject matter: SHJ is mainly devoted to rare plants and animals in strange lands, and mythical and legendary figures in remote ancient times, while YJZ is more of a realistic presentation of ghosts and spirits in the netherworld as a reflection of this world. What is more, strange things and happenings in SHJ are presented as having been recorded exclusively as personal experience, while supernatural beings and happenings in YJZ are all adapted from hearsay and rumours, thus leaving much room for imagination and creativity.<sup>88</sup>

Hong Mai's enthusiasm for the supernatural apparently ran counter to Song neo-Confucian doctrines. As a scholar steeped in the Confucian classics, he tried to strike a balance between the heterodox and the orthodox, and as a result, the supernatural world in YJZ is seen projected in the rational light of moral principles. His personal interest in the supernatural world and his concern about social injustice in the real world find an outlet through ghost stories dealing with divine retributions, which account for nearly one fifth of more than 3,000 items in the 206-*juan* edition of this work.

Hong's criticism of official corruption and social injustice is most strongly expressed in "Mao Lie Yin Yu" 毛烈陰獄 (Mao Lie Tried in Hell)<sup>89</sup> in *Juan* 19 of "The First Record Book". This is a story about Chen Qi, the eldest son of a big family, who secretly mortgages all the family's farmland for fear that the land be divided among his brothers after the death of their mother. When time comes for Chen Qi to redeem the mortgaged land, Mao Lie, a local scoundrel with a large ill-gotten fortune, goes back on his word, and shows no sign of giving up the fields. Chen Qi is forced to bring Mao Lie to court in the hope of recovering his title deed only to find himself caught in a hopeless lawsuit trap set by Mao Lie and corrupt officials. In despair, Chen Qi appeals for justice to Lord of Mt. Tai. The god sympathises with his sufferings and corrects the wrongs by bringing Mao Lie down to Hell for trial. The story ends up with justice done to the scoundrel, the corrupted officials, and other accomplices as well.

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<sup>88</sup> As Hong Mai admitted in his "Yijian Zhi Ding Xu" 夷堅支丁序 (Preface to the Fourth Chapter of the Branch Record Book of YJZ), "YJZ has its origin all in hearsay and rumours." (*Yijian zhu zhi jie de zhi chuan wen* 夷堅諸志皆得之傳聞). For this preface, see Ding Xigen (1996:99).

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Vol. 250 of GJCS, pp. 55-56.



Romantic relationships between men and ghosts is a traditional theme recurrent in *zhiguai* literature through successive dynasties. One of the best-known stories of this type in YJZ is "Wu Xiao Yuanwai" 吳小員外 (The Young Squire Wu)<sup>90</sup> included in *Juan* 4 of "The First Record Book". This is a touching story about a young man by the name of Wu, who, at first sight, falls in love with a tavern girl. Infatuated, he often dreams of meeting her. The tavern-keeper, however, gives his daughter a good scolding for her lack of propriety in the presence of men. The girl dies of sorrow, but her ghost does not give up her pursuit for love and pleasure, and seduces Wu into living with her. Months of making love with the ghost reduces Wu to a haggard state, which arouses the suspicion of his parents. At their request, a Daoist priest by the name of Huangfu comes to their help, and the ghost girl finally falls under his magic sword, dying a second death.

Tragic love between men and the supernatural, as portrayed in this story, is, in essence, a reflection of the tragedies met by real men and women in their pursuit of love and happiness. The objection of their parents and interference of the Daoist priest, as we also have seen in the story "Gou Sheng" from *Maoting Kehua*, represent a basic moral principle propounded by Song Neo-Confucianists: "the suppression of human desires by heavenly principles" (*tianli mie renyu* 天理滅人欲). This story might have been intended to be an exhortation to abstinence and self-discipline, but through the tragedy arising from the conflict between "human desires" and "heavenly principles", it reads well as an ironical reference to the hypocrisy of Song Neo-Confucian moral ethics.

In terms of size and influence, TPGJ finds no match anywhere except in YJZ, the publication of which immediately drew wide attention from Song scholars and story-tellers. It seems that none of them could afford to ignore this work while preparing scripts for telling stories at market or making up stories of their own for their collections.<sup>91</sup> The influence of YJZ was not confined to Song times but extended far beyond the Jin-Yuan period into the Ming and even Qing dynasties.

This work was also an inspiration for scholars and story-tellers of later generations. Quite a few *huaben* and *ni huaben* stories of the Ming and Qing either have their sources originating from YJZ or are simply retold from tales in this

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<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Vol. 250 of GJCS, pp. 27-28.

collection using the current colloquial language. Rewritten from YJZ by Ling Mengchu into his *Er Pai* are more than 30 stories, some of which are "zhenghua" 正話 (main story) and some "ruhua" 入話 (introducing story), and such is also the case with Feng Menglong's *San Yan*, where a considerable number of stories are found having their origin in YJZ.<sup>92</sup>

## Section 2: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Jin-Yuan dynasties

- Yuan Haowen and his *Xu Yijian Zhi*

Hong Mai's influence upon later writers of classical Chinese supernatural fiction is most directly manifested in *Xu Yijian Zhi* 續夷堅志 (A Sequel to the *Records of Yijian*), and *Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi* 湖海新聞夷堅續志 (A Sequel to the *Records of Yijian* Adapted from the Newly-heard Talks from Lakes and Seas), both of which were compiled as a sequel to YJZ, as suggested by the titles. The Jin dynasty (1115-1234) witnessed a great decline in terms of both quality and quantity in the production of works of the supernatural fiction. Of the very few *zhiguai* works produced during this period of time, *Xu Yijian Zhi* was the most influential and representative.

This work was compiled by Yuan Haowen 元好問, a native of Xiurong 秀容, Taiyuan 太原 Prefecture, present-day Xin County 忻縣 of Shanxi Province, who is remembered in the history of Chinese literature as the greatest Jin poet. Yuan Haowen, whose courtesy name was Yuzhi 裕之, also known by his literary name Yishan 遺山, was born in 1190 under the reign of Emperor Zhangzong 章宗 of the Jin dynasty, and died at the age of sixty-eight in the seventh year under the reign of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 of the Yuan dynasty. He passed the imperial civil service examination and obtained his *Jinshi* title in 1219, and was later elected to the *Hanlin Yuan*. After the fall of Jin, he refused to serve under the new regime and retired into his literary world. Besides *Xu Yijian Zhi*, he left behind *Yishan Shiji* 遺山詩集 (Collected Poems by Yishan), *Renchen Zabian* 壬辰雜編 (Miscellaneous Collections

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<sup>91</sup> See Luo Ye at Note 11.

<sup>92</sup> See *San Yan* and *Er Pai* at Note 71 of this chapter.

from the Year *Renchen*) which is a collection of Jin historical records, and an anthology of Jin Poetry entitled *Zhongzhou Ji* 中州集 (Collected Works of Zhongzhou).<sup>93</sup>

Compiled by Yuan Haowen in his later years, after his retirement to his hometown, *Xu Yijian Zhi* enjoyed a high reputation and great popularity in Yuan times. The Yuan scholar Song Wu 宋無 thought extremely highly of *Xu Yijian Zhi* and elevated this work over its predecessor in his "Xu Yijian Zhi Ba" 續夷堅志跋 (Afterword to *Xu Yijian Zhi*),<sup>94</sup> and his idea of this work was echoed by his contemporary Shi Yan 石岩, who described *Xu Yijian Zhi* as a work of great value, well worthy of being copied down by hand.<sup>95</sup> In terms of size and significance, this work is no match for YJZ in the history of classical Chinese supernatural fiction. The overestimation Yuan Haowen received for his *Xu Yijian Zhi* was more owing to his high reputation as the most influential Jin poet than to his real achievements as a *xiaoshuo* writer.

*Xu Yijian Zhi* is listed as being composed of 4 *juan* in *Bu Yuan Shi Yiwen Zhi* 補元史藝文志 (Works Added to the Catalogue Book of the History of the Yuan Dynasty),<sup>96</sup> and in *Bu Liao Jin Yuan Yiwen Zhi* 補遼金元藝文志 (Works Added to the Catalogue Book of the Liao, Jin and Yuan Dynasties).<sup>97</sup> A record of it appears in JYLSM, which ascribes the authorship to Yuan Yishan without giving the number of *juan* of this work.<sup>98</sup> Extant versions include the Qing edition collated by Zhang Mu 張穆 (1905), and the lithographic copy by Saoye Shanfang 掃葉山房 Printing House, and a collated edition by Chang Zhenguo 常振國 (1986), all in four *juan*. This four-*juan* work is composed of two parts, with "the Former Part" (*qian ji* 前集) including 103 items and "the Latter Part" (*hou ji* 後集) 105 items. The majority of

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<sup>93</sup> For more about Yuan Haowen, see *Juan* 126 of *Jin Shi* 金史 (The History of the Jin Dynasty), and "Yuan Yishan Haowen Xiansheng Nianpu" 元遺山好問先生年譜 (A Chronology of the Life of Mr. Yuan Yishan Haowen) by Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1978).

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 120-121).

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996:123).

<sup>96</sup> See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 31.

<sup>97</sup> Here only the title and author is given with the number of *juan* left unmentioned. See Vol. 002 of CSJCJB, p. 63.

<sup>98</sup> See Vol. 005 of CSJCJB, p. 49.

items are given with sources provided at the end to convince the audience of the honesty of the compiler.

*Xu Yijian Zhi* is a typical work of supernatural fiction, and as noted in ZMTY, "recorded in it is nothing but strange and supernatural happenings between the periods of Taihe 泰和 (1201-1208) and Zhenyou 貞祐 (1213-1217) of the Jin dynasty" (*suo ji jie jin taihe zhenyou jian shenguai zhi shi* 所紀皆金泰和貞祐間神怪之事).<sup>99</sup> Divine retribution is a constant theme threading throughout this collection, as shown in the story "Zhang Tong Ru Ming" 張童入冥 (A Lad Named Zhang Enters the Netherworld).<sup>100</sup> The death of the boy comes as part of the punishment for his father's violation of the Buddhist principle of "No Taking Life" (*bu shasheng* 不殺生) by catching and killing birds. The boy is later raised from the dead owing to the filial piety and devotion he shows towards his parents. If this story stopped here, there would be nothing special about it. What makes it more interesting is another story embedded in it about a monk by the name of Lü.

After the boy comes back to life, he is sent by his parents to a temple to serve the Buddha in gratitude for being resurrected from the dead. His encounter there with this monk suffering from a running sore under one of his armpits reminds him of his sight in hell of the spirit of a monk being tormented for his failure to observe Buddhist doctrines. When the boy reveals to the monk what he has seen of him in Hell, Lü is terrified into moving out into a quiet and clean room, sparing no effort to study and practice Buddhist doctrines whole-heartedly. As a reward for his devotion, the monk is cured of his sore three years later. Through the boy's death and subsequent return to life as well through the monk's suffering and subsequent recovery, the message is made unmistakably clear that "good is rewarded with good and evil with evil" (*shan you shanbao e you ebao* 善有善報惡有惡報), regardless of age and status.

- *Yiwen Zonglu and Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi*

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<sup>99</sup> This work is listed in ZMTY as containing two *juan*. A four-*juan* version of *Xu Yijian Zhi* is included in Vol. 1266 of XXSKQS. For the explanatory postscript to this work in ZMTY, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2979.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Vol. 250 of GJCS, pp. 136-137.

Yuan rule of China lasted only ninety years from the fall of Southern Song in 1279 to the establishment of the Ming dynasty in 1368. In the history of Chinese literature, the Yuan is best remembered as a golden time for the production and performance of *yuanqu* 元曲 (Yuan drama).<sup>101</sup> Apart from this, there was not much progress made in other genres of literature. Works of supernatural fiction suffered further under the Yuan after the sharp drop in output which the Jin dynasty had experienced. Important among the very few *zhiguai* works produced during the Yuan are *Yiwen Zonglu* 異聞總錄 (A General Record of Strange Talks), and *Hu Hai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi*.

*Yiwen Zonglu*, which is listed in *Juan* 12 of *Qianqingtang Shumu* 千頃堂書目 (The Catalogue Book of Qianqing Chamber, hereafter QQTSM) as consisting of four *juan*, is a work of supernatural fiction of unknown authorship.<sup>102</sup> Although many references are made in this work to Song events and reign titles, it is considered to be a Yuan product owing to the mention in the item entitled "Lin Xingke" 林行可 in *Juan* One of the year of Dingyou 丁酉 of the Dade 大德 Period (1297-1307) under the reign of Emperor Chengzong 成宗 of the Yuan dynasty.<sup>103</sup> Stories about encounters with ghosts make up the bulk of the work, and notorious for rampant plagiarism, *Yiwen Zonglu* hardly provides any new insights into the supernatural world.<sup>104</sup>

*Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi* does not survive in its original form. Extant are two wood-block printed editions dated from the Yuan, both of which contain only "the former part" (*qianji* 前集) in 12 *juan*, a Ming wood-block printed edition which includes only "the latter part" (*houji* 後集), and two Ming hand-copied editions, one containing only "the former part" in ten *juan*, and the other "the latter part" in 6 *juan*. A more complete version of this work is the one collated by Zhang Heng 張衡 and included in his *Shiyuan Congshu* 適園叢書 (The Collectanea from the Garden of Leisure), which has two parts of four *juan* with one *juan* attached as appendix. In

<sup>101</sup> "Yuanqu" is a collective name for *sanqu* 散曲, and *zaju* 雜劇, the former referring to lyrics set to the music known as "*beiqu*" 北曲 (the northern music), and the latter to a variety of dramas performed to the accompaniment of *beiqu*.

<sup>102</sup> The version of QQTSM I refer to hereafter is the one reprinted in Vol. 676 of SKQS. For the entry of *Yiwen Zongmu* in QQTSM, see Vol. 676 of SKQS, p. 350. A four-*juan* version of this work of fiction is reprinted in Vol. 2719 of CSJCCB, which, however, dates it as a Song work.

<sup>103</sup> For accounts in *Juan* 144 of ZMTY about the authorship and dating of this work, see Vol. 007 of GJCS, p. 2997.

<sup>104</sup> The first ten items in *Juan* One of this work are all taken from YJZ, and some other items in this work are extracted from Tang *zhiguai* works such as *Xuanguai Lu*, and *Xu Xuanguai Lu*.

1986 there appeared together with *Xu Yijian Zhi* in one book the Zhonghua Shuju edition of *Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi*, collated by Jin Xin 金心. This edition comprises two parts with the former part containing 12 *juan* and the latter part 6 *juan* and is generally believed to be the most complete version of this work.<sup>105</sup>

There is no record whatsoever of this work found in catalogue books of official history. Listed in QQTSM is a work in two *juan* entitled *Huhai Xinwen*, which is likely to be *Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi* under a different title.<sup>106</sup> As is the case with *Yiwen Zonglu*, *Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi* has many items simply reproduced from earlier works of supernatural fiction. For example, the story "Matou Niangzi" 馬頭娘子 (A Horse-head Lady) in the "Shiyi Men" 拾遺門 (the Gate for Supplementary Amplifications) Chapter of the Former Part is just an shortened version of "Nü Hua Can" from *Juan* 14 of Gan Bao's SSJ,<sup>107</sup> and the story "Yi Meng Huangliang" 一夢黃梁 (A Golden Millet Dream) in the "Shenxian Men" 神仙門 (the Gate for Immortals) Chapter of the Latter Part is an adapted version of *Zhenzhong Ji*.<sup>108</sup> Taken as a whole, this work is no better than Yuan Haowen's *Xu Yijian Zhi*, not to mention Hong Mai's YJZ. The worthiest thing about this work perhaps lies in the preservation of some earlier stories and current folk tales, which might otherwise have been lost.

- A brief conclusion

As we have seen in the above, the Song dynasty witnessed the rise of *ci*-poetry and *huaben* fiction, but the *zhiguai* tradition was continued as a literary vehicle most befitting the interests and tastes of intellectuals of unorthodox mind. The continuation of this tradition is fully manifested in the similarity in form and content between the Tang and Song *zhiguai* tales. In form, both are narrated mainly in the manner of the Six Dynasties and marked by the employment of a smooth and elegant *guwen* prose style. In content, the Song *zhiguai* fiction tend to be tales about unusual

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<sup>105</sup> A historical account of the editions of this work is given in the 1986 edition of *Huhai Xinwen Yijian Xu Zhi*.

<sup>106</sup> For the entry of *Huhai Xinwen* in QQTSM, see Vol. 676 of SKQS, p. 350.

<sup>107</sup> See the SSJ section of Chapter Two for this story.

<sup>108</sup> See *Zhenzhong Ji* at Note 13 of Chapter Three.



happenings and miraculous signs, and accounts of superhuman/supernatural beings as we have seen in the earlier Tang tales. Song writers were good at imitating Tang fiction, but displayed little interest in blazing new trails. As a result, their writings were generally devoid of originality and creativity as shown in their Tang counterparts.

After Song there was a sharp decline in the production of supernatural fiction during the Jin and Yuan dynasties. Although *zhiguai* tales continued to be written and read, many of them were no more than reproductions of old ones, lacking in originality and imagination. This situation, however, did not last long, and with the fall of the short-lived Yuan dynasty, there was a resurgence of interest among Ming literati in writing and reading *zhiguai* fiction.

## Chapter Five: Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction of the Ming and Qing Dynasties

### Section 1: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Ming dynasty

In the history of Chinese literature, the Ming and Qing dynasties were times when the fully-fledged chapter-division novels and short stories in vernacular came of age and obtained an increasingly dominant position over other genres of literature. However, literary language *zhiguai* fiction did not become a lost art, in spite of being more or less overshadowed by its colloquial language counterparts.

After undergoing a period of stagnation during the Jin and Yuan dynasties, supernatural fiction in classical Chinese was soon recovered under the Ming. The appearance of Qu You's 瞿佑 (1347-1433) *Jiandeng Xinhua* 剪燈新話 (New Anecdotes by the Lamplight) in the early Ming marked the genre's emergence from its two-century-long recession. Following *Jiandeng Xinhua* more than eighty collections of supernatural stories in literary language came out in succession,<sup>1</sup> many of which were written or compiled as an imitation of or inspired by Qu You.

Well-known among them were *Jiandeng Yuhua* 剪燈餘話 (More Anecdotes by the Lamplight) by Li Zhen 李禎 (1376-1452), *Xiaopin Ji* 笑顰集 (A Collection of Awkwardly Imitated Tales) by Zhao Bi 趙弼 (fl. 1430), *Huaying Ji* 花影集 (Stories Collected Under the Shadow of Flowers) by Tao Fu 陶輔 (fl. 1490), *Yuanzhu Zhiyu Xuechuang Tanyi* 鴛渚志餘雪窗談異 (Talk about the Strange under a Snow-lit Window) by a Jiaxing 嘉興 hermit only known to us by his literary name of Diao Yuan Hu Ke 釣鴛湖客 (Duck-hunting Lake Guest) (fl. 1570), and *Mideng Yinhua* 覓燈因話 (Yet More Anecdotes by the Lamplight) by Shao Jingzhan 邵景詹 (fl. 1590). Most representative among Qu You's imitators are Li Zhen and Shao Jingzhan, whose *Jiandeng Yuhua* and *Mideng Yinhua* together with *Jiandeng Xinhua* make up the well-known "Jiandeng Sanhua" 剪燈三話 (Anecdotes by the Lamplight in Three Parts) in the history of Chinese fiction.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of works of fiction produced during this period of time, see Ning Jiayu 寧稼雨 (1996).

The Ming literary achievements in classical fiction are closely linked with the "Jiandeng" series. As the progenitor of this series, the position of Qu You's *Jiandeng Xinhua* is second to none. Qu You was a native of Qiantang 錢塘, present-day Hangzhou. He styled himself Zongji 宗吉, and was also known by the literary names Cunzhai 存齋 and Yintang 吟堂. In 1377, the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Hongwu 洪武 reign (1368-1399), he was made a minor civilian official of the Ming dynasty and was later invited to join in the compilation of the official history. He was put into prison in 1408, the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Yongle 永樂 reign (1403-14025), demoted and sent into exile as punishment for writing "offensive" poems. He lived in exile in Baoan 保安, roughly present-day Huailai 懷來 County, Hebei Province, for 18 years and was not allowed to return home until an imperial amnesty was issued in 1425 when the Hongxi 洪熙 Emperor succeeded the throne. Qu You died at the age of 87, leaving behind *Chunqiu Guanzhu* 春秋貫珠 (The String Beads of Spring and Autumn), *Guanjian Zhaibian* 管見摘編 (A Selection of My Humble Opinions), *Cunzhai Yigao* 存齋遺稿 (Posthumous Manuscripts of Cunzhai), *Guitian Shihua* 歸田詩話 (Talks on Poetry in Retirement), etc.<sup>2</sup>

A record of *Jiandeng Xinhua* is JYLSM, where this work is listed together with *Jiandeng Yuhua*. Attached to it is a simple explanatory postscript as to the authorship and dating of these two works, but there is no mention of the number of *juan*.<sup>3</sup> There is a more detailed account in *Baichuan Shuzhi* of the authorship, size, style, and subject matter of *Jiandeng Xinhua*.<sup>4</sup> The earliest version extant of this work is the one known as "Yang's Qinghui Chamber Wood-block Printed Edition" (*Yang Shi Qinghui Tang Keben* 楊氏清匯堂刻本) produced in 1511, the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Zhengde 正德 Period (1506-1522) of the Ming dynasty. In 1957 an unabridged version of *Jiandeng Xinhua* in four *juan* was published by Shanghai Gudian Wenxue

<sup>2</sup> For an evidential study of Qu You's life career, see Li Jianguo 李建國 and Chen Guoping 陳國平 (1992:90-96).

<sup>3</sup> For the entry of *Jiandeng Xinhua* in JYLSM, see Vol. 005 of CSJCJB, pp. 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 599).

Chubanshe.<sup>5</sup> Edited and collated by Zhou Yi 周夷, this version includes twenty-two stories with "Qiuxiang Ting Ji" 秋香亭記 (The Story of Qiuxiang Pavilion)<sup>6</sup> and "Ji Mei Ji" 寄梅記 (The Story of a Plum Blossom) attached as appendixes.

*Jiandeng Xinhua* is basically a collection of supernatural stories written in the manner of Tang *chuanqi*. Most of the stories in it are set towards the end of the Yuan dynasty during the chaotic Zhizheng 至正 Period (1341-1368). Of the twenty items (excluding two later additions), there is only one, entitled "Lianfang Lou Ji" 聯芳樓記 (The Story of Lianfang Tower), which is purely a love story without any supernatural elements. Of these supernatural tales, thirteen are devoted to accounts of ghosts and spirits, mostly tragic love stories about men and ghosts with very few dealing with conflicts between them. The best-known of this type in *Jiandeng Xinhua* is "Lüyi Ren Zhuan" 綠衣人傳 (The Story of the Lady in Green), in which Qu You presents to us a most touching story about a ghost appearing from the netherworld to resume her unrealized love with a man by the name of Zhao Yuan.<sup>7</sup>

"Lüyi Ren Zhuan" has had a huge influence upon writers and dramatists of later generations. Famous stories adapted from it are "Hongmei Ji" 紅梅記 (The Story of a Red Plum Blossom), a story in *chuanqi* form by the Ming scholar Zhou Chaojun 周朝俊, and "Mumian An Zheng Huchen Baoyuan" 木棉庵鄭虎臣報冤 (Zheng Huchen Avenges Himself at the Silk Cotton Nunnery) in *Yushi Mingyan* by Feng Menglong. In the 1950s, this story was adapted into a *Kun* opera (*kunqu* 昆曲) entitled *Li Huiniang* 李慧娘 by Meng Chao 孟超. Other well-written stories of this type are "Jin Fengchai Ji" 金鳳釵記 (The Story of a Gold Phoenix Hairpin) and "Cuicui Zhuan" 翠翠傳 (The Story of Cuicui), both of which tell of the reunion of young men and young women in the nether world after their dream of becoming husband and wife comes to nothing due to evil worldly forces.

Best known of the very few stories dealing with conflicts and fights between men and devils/spirits in *Jianden Xinhua* are "Shenyang Dong Ji" 申陽洞記 (The

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<sup>5</sup> This is a collected edition of the "Jiandeng Sanhua", which I hereafter refer to when discussing a particular story from this "Jianden" series.

<sup>6</sup> This story is noted by the Ming scholar Ling Yunhan 凌雲翰 in "Jiandeng Xinhua Xu" 剪燈新話序 as having been written in imitation of the Tang *chuanqi* story *Yingying Zhuan*. For Ling's preface, see Ding Xigen (1996: 600-601).

<sup>7</sup> The main story of "Lüyi Ren Zhuan" has its origin in the Tang story "Wang Xuanzhi" 王玄之 from *Guang Yi Ji* 廣異記 (Extensive Records of the Strange) by Dai Fu 戴孚 (fl. 770), which is quoted in *Juan* 334 of TPGJ.

Story of Shenyang Cave) in *Juan* 3, and "Taixu Sifa Zhuan" 太虛司法傳 (The Story of a Heavenly Judge) in *Juan* 4. The former tells of a man by the name of Li Defeng using wit and power to get rid of devils in Shenyang Cave for the sake of local people and being rewarded at the end with three women he saved from the devils' claws; in the latter, there is a vivid account of a virtuous man named Feng Dachao fighting for his life with ghosts, and after his death being promoted to a judgeship in Heaven for his bravery and strong sense of social justice. Part of this story was later incorporated by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715), into "Ye Gou" 野狗 (A Wild Dog) and adapted into "Xi Fangping" 席方平 of LZZY.

- Li Zhen and his *Jiandeng Yuhua*:

The most influential among Qu You's numerous imitators of the Ming dynasty was Li Zhen 李禎, who was also known by his courtesy name Changqi 昌祺, a native of Luling 廬陵, present-day Ji'an 吉安, Jiangxi Province. In 1404, the second year of the Yongle Period, Li passed the imperial civil service examination and obtained his *jinshi* title. He was later elected to the *Hanlin Yuan*, and participated in the compilation of the *Yongle Dadian*.<sup>8</sup>

Li Zhen was a very prolific and popular writer. Besides *Jiandeng Yuhua*, he also wrote *Yunpi Shiji* 運甓詩集 (Poems Collected Bit by Bit) in 1 *juan*, *Yunpi Mangao* 運甓漫稿 (Random Jottings Accumulated Bit by Bit) in 7 *juan*, *Lianxi Zhi* 濂溪志 (Records from Lianxi River) in 9 *juan*, and *Li Changqi Shihua* 李昌祺詩話 (Poetry Talks of Li Changqi). He enjoyed a nationwide reputation for his academic achievements and literary talents before he died at the age of 75. Ironically, after his death, he was not entitled to be worshipped at the ancestral temple precisely because of his *Jiandeng Xinhua*, which would bring shame on the temple.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For more about Li Zhen's life, see "The Biography of Li Zhen" in *Juan* 161 of *Ming Shi* 明史 (The History of the Ming Dynasty).

<sup>9</sup> As recorded by the Ming scholar Du Mu 都穆 in *Juan* 1 of his *Tan Zuan* 譚纂 (Collected Talks), on an inspection tour made by the imperial commissioner Han Yong 韓雍 during the Jingtai 景泰 Period (1450-1456), an ancestral temple was set up in Luling, but Li Zhen was not allowed a place on the altar because of his *Jiandeng Xinhua*. A different reason, however, is given in *Juan* 85 of *Baishi Huibian* 稗史匯編 (Collected Historical Anecdotes) by Wang Qi 王圻, who attributes the exclusion of Li Zhen from the memorial hall to his deliberate use of stories for personal attack against his contemporary scholars.

As recorded in his "Jiandeng Yuhua Xu" 剪燈餘話序 (Preface to *Jiandeng Yuhua*),<sup>10</sup> seven years before starting to write *Jiandeng Yuhua*, Li Zhen had written "Jia Yunhua Huanhun Ji" 賈雲華還魂記 (The Story of Jia Yunhua's Rising from the Dead), which was an imitation of Gui Heng's 桂衡 "Rourou Zhuan" 柔柔傳 (The Story of Rourou). His story-writing interest was reignited years later when he got a copy of *Jiandeng Xinhua* from one of his friends. He loved this work so much that he decided to imitate Qu You in producing a collection of his own, and by the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Yongle Period (1420), forty years after the appearance of *Jiandeng Xinhua*, he had written twenty stories, which he converted into a four-juan-book-length collection entitled *Jiandeng Yuhua*. This work does not survive in the original. The Ming and Qing versions of this work available to us now are all only in three *juan*.<sup>11</sup> An unabridged modern edition of this work reconstructed from a Japanese ancient text was published together with *Jiandeng Xinhua* and *Mideng Xinhua* in one book form in 1957.

In terms of book title, number of *juan*, and theme and content, this work bears a striking resemblance to *Jiandeng Xinhua*. There are five stories to each *juan* except *Juan Five*, which is a later addition comprising only one story, "Jia Yunhua Huanhun Ji". In terms of theme and content, *Jiandeng Yuhua* is largely a collection of strange and supernatural stories, with three quarters of the collection devoted to accounts of the supernatural.<sup>12</sup> As noted by the Ming scholar Wang Ying 王應 in his preface to this work, "The content of this collection is all about ghosts, spirits and strange things" (*suo zai jie youming renwu lingyi zhi shi* 所載皆幽冥人物靈異之事).<sup>13</sup>

This collection is best known for its love stories, the most famous of them being "Fengweicao Ji" 鳳尾草記 (The Story of a Sago Cycad), and "Qiu Xi Fang Pipa Ting Ji" 秋夕訪琵琶亭記 (A Visit to the Pipa Pavilion on an Autumn Evening).

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 603-604).

<sup>11</sup> The ancient texts extant of this work mentioned above are all wood-blocked copies made during the Chenghua 成化 Period (1465-1487) of the Ming dynasty, in the 56<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1791), and in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi 同治 (1861), of the Qing dynasty respectively.

<sup>12</sup> Of the twenty-one stories in this collection, all fall into the category of supernatural fiction except "Luanluan Zhuan" 鸞鸞傳 (The Story of Luanluan), "Lianli Shu Ji" 連理樹記 (A Story of Two Tress with Branches Interlocked), "Qiongnu Zhuan" 瓊奴傳 (The Story of Qiongnu), "Furong Ping Ji" 芙蓉屏記 (A Story of a Lotus Flower Screen), "Qiuqian Hui Ji" 秋千會記 (A Story of Swing Games), and "Zhizheng Jiren Xing" 至正妓人行 (The Story of a Whore of the Zhizheng Period), the last of which is actually a narrative poem of more than one thousand two hundred characters.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 605-606).



"Fengweicao Ji" is about the unfailing love between a young man by the name Longsheng and a young woman who is the daughter of the Zu family. Longsheng makes an oath to the girl by a hundred year old cycad tree, saying "May you blossom and bear fruit if my wish to marry her comes true; may your roots dry up and your leaves wither to death if my wish comes to nothing." With the decline of the Zu family's fortunes, however, Longsheng's parents break off the engagement lest their son be tied down to such a marriage in future. In despair, the Zu's daughter hangs herself, and the tree withers away in no time. Longsheng cannot forget his first love even after he becomes a high-ranking official. With the help of a Daoist master the dead girl appears in his dream, saying that although she wishes to be his wife in her next life to repay his love, her wish cannot be realised because she has just been informed that she will soon be reincarnated as a boy and be born into a Hu family in Luoyang. The news of her incarnation may give some life to the story, but it can by no means change the tragic nature of this story because she is doomed to live separately from Longsheng in her afterlife.

"Qiu Xi Fang Pipa Ting Ji" is a moving story about the romantic encounter of Shen Shao, a travelling poet, with the ghost of Zheng Wan'e, a concubine of Chen Youliang King of Han 漢王陳友諒 (1320-1363), during his visit to the Pipa Pavilion on an autumn day. They fall in love with each other at first sight, regretting not having known each other earlier, and exchange poems, pouring out feelings and emotions. In terms of theme, structure, and the use of images, this story owes much to "Teng Mu Zui You Jujing Yuan Ji" 滕穆醉游聚景園記 (Teng Mu's Drunken Visit to Jujing Garden) by Qu You, which might have been inspired by the Tang story "Zhou-Qin Xing Ji".<sup>14</sup>

The influence of Tang supernatural fiction finds even fuller expression in the story "Wu Ping Lingguai Lu" 武平靈怪錄 (Wu Ping's Records of Ghosts and Spirits) in *Juan* Three, which reads not much different from Niu Sengru's "Yuan Wuyou". In this story, Li Zhen tells of a man named Qi Xie<sup>15</sup> coming a long way to pay a visit to his old friend only to find him already gone. He drops in on a monk,

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<sup>14</sup> This is a story about Niu Sengru's romantic encounters in the nether world with wives and concubines of emperors of former dynasties. This story is quoted in *Juan* 489 of TPGJ with Niu Sengru given as the author, but it is generally considered to have been written by Wei Guan as a political satire against Niu Sengru. See also Note 13 of Chapter Three.

<sup>15</sup> For an explanation of the ambiguous Qi Xie, see Note 43 of Chapter One.

asking to be accommodated for the night at his temple, and is warmly received. That night, Qi Xie enthusiastically joins visitors to this temple, talking about Buddhist doctrines, composing impromptu poems, and telling jokes and funny stories to amuse each other. At daybreak when the guests take their leave, the temple turns out all of a sudden to be deserted and the monk nothing but a dilapidated clay idol. With great expectations, Qi Xie comes to visit his friend, and in great disappointment he goes on a long journey home. This story can read as a metaphor for the hollow, empty, meaningless life in this world, echoing the Buddhist belief that "The world is nothing but illusion" (*si da jie kong* 四大皆空).

- Shao Jingzhan and his *Mideng Yinhua*

*Mideng Yinhua* is listed in the "Xiaoshuo" section of "Zibu" in QQTSM with Shao Jingzhan given as the author. About Shao Jingzhan, no record whatsoever can be found in official history. The only available information comes from his "Mideng Yinhua Xiaoyin" 覓燈因話小引 (A Brief Preface to *Mideng Yinhua*) that his literary name was Zihaozi 自好子, and his studio was called Yaoqing Ge 遙青閣 (Yaoqing Pavilion).<sup>16</sup> In his preface, the author claims to have been inspired by *Jiandeng Xinhua* to write stories about the strange and supernatural, and to have drawn heavily on the "fantastic and miraculous things heard or witnessed" (*erwen mudu gu jin qi mi* 耳聞目睹古今奇秘).<sup>17</sup> We do not know how long it took him to write *Mideng Yinhua* except that he finished this work in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Wanli 萬曆 Period (1592) of the Ming dynasty.

*Mideng Yinhua* in two *juan* has eight stories in all. The stories are generally well-written in terms of style and structure. The language is plain and quite expressive, the sentences are lively and rich in variety, and the rhythm of narration gains speed owing to the rare insertion of poems, and the minimal use of rhymed and parallel sentences. The simple and direct prose style shown in this work marks a significant deviation from the flamboyant style prevalent in *xiaoshuo* writing, which

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 610).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

is characterised by the frequent interposition of poems and the habitual use of parallel and rhymed sentences.

Of the eight stories, "Gui Qian Meng Gan Lu" 桂遷夢感錄 (Gui Qian's Response to a Dream) is the longest and also the most famous for the complicated plot and delicate portrayal of characters.<sup>18</sup> Set in the Dade 大德 Period (1297-1307) of the Yuan dynasty, this is a story about the fall and rise, financially and morally, of a man by the name of Gui Qian. As the story unfolds, Gui Qian suffers a great loss in business and is almost driven in bankruptcy by his debtors. Just when Gui feels that there is no way out, Shi Ji, an old school friend of his, comes to his help and pays off his debts. With the permission of Shi Ji, Gui builds a cottage by an old tree on his farm. One day, Gui catches sight of a white rat stealing into his cottage and following it he finds gold underground. He digs it out secretly, uses it to buy a large quantity of fertile land and becomes a man of great fortunes almost overnight. Shi Ji, being generous by nature, leaves little money for his wife and son to live on after his death. The mother and son therefore come to Gui Qian to seek his help but are received coldly as if they were strangers to him.

Gui Qian becomes increasingly uneasy about his rapidly growing fortunes. On the advice of a man by the name of Liu, he decides to buy himself an official title in the hope that he will be exempted from taxes. Liu, however, wins himself an official post with Gui's money, and when Gui comes to ask him to return the money, he turns a deaf ear to his request. Unable to tolerate being cheated and treated with contempt, Gui steals into Liu's office on a dark night with a sharp dagger in hand to avenge himself. Gui is awaiting his chance impatiently when suddenly he finds Shi Ji seated high in front of him, and Gui's whole family turned into dogs, begging for leftovers from the table. Feeling the prick of his conscience, Gui Qian gives up the thought of revenge and returns home to rebury Shi Ji and his wife with full honours and marry his daughter to Shi's son in order to atone for his misdeeds. The scoundrel Liu ends up sentenced to death as a punishment for deception and corruption. Gui Qian is transformed into a man of virtue. He no longer bears a grudge against Liu, and,

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<sup>18</sup> This story is retold in the colloquial language by Feng Menglong and incorporated under the title of "Gui Yuanwai Qiongtu Chanhui" 桂員外窮途懺悔 (Squire Gui Repents at the end of his Road) in his *Jingshi Tongyan*.

repaying evil with good, even offers help to Liu's family after Liu is removed from his post and put into prison.

Although this story is not void of supernatural elements, much attention is paid to realistic presentation of contemporary life. It is clear in this story that attempts have been made to portray life in all its facets, pleasant as well as unpleasant, the beautiful as well as the ugly, the righteous as well as the evil. The author seems not to be content with writing about the supernatural for the sake of the supernatural. Rather, accounts of the supernatural in this story are only a means employed to serve a moral purpose, that is, to "enlighten and admonish the world".

Such is also the case with the other seven stories. Owing to subtle descriptions of human experience against a supernatural background, and lifelike accounts of the rapidly changing society of the late Ming, *Mideng Yinhua* aroused great interest among *ni huaben* story writers. They used stories in it for source materials, adapting them into popular vernacular language ones.<sup>19</sup> The influence of this work, however, was not confined to providing source materials for later writers to draw on. Its simple and direct prose style also provides a more effective method of narration for writers of later generations.

## Section 2: Classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the Qing dynasty

- Pu Songling and his *Liaozhai Zhiyi*

The fall of the Ming dynasty to the Manchus shook all intellectuals out of their complacency. With a ruthless literary inquisition under the new regime, they found no outlets safer for their academic energy and literary expression than the evidential study of ancient classics and composition of fiction, especially works of fiction about the supernatural. As a result, the early Qing witnessed a disproportional prosperity in the production of works of fiction as compared with other genres of literature.

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<sup>19</sup> For example, "Yao Gongzi Zhuan" 姚公子傳 (The Story of Yao, the Son of a Rich Family), and "Wo Fashi Ruding Lu" 臥法師入定錄 (A Story of Daoist Master Wo) were later included in *Juan 22* and *Juan 32* of *Pai'an Jingqi Er Ke* after being adapted into *ni huaben* stories by Ling Mengshu.

Important works produced during this period of time are *Chibei Outan* 池北偶談 (Casual Talks at the Studio North of the Pond),<sup>20</sup> *Yuchu Xinzhì* 虞初新志 (A New Collection of Tales about the Strange),<sup>21</sup> *Yinshuwo Shuying* 因樹屋書影 (The Book Shadow in Yinshu Jail),<sup>22</sup> *Gu Sheng* 觚剩 (Miscellaneous Jottings),<sup>23</sup> etc. Although none of them count as masterpieces, they paved the way for the appearance of *LZZY*, the greatest classical Chinese work of supernatural fiction, by Pu Songling.

Pu Songling, whose courtesy name was Liuxian 留仙, was a native of Zichuan 淄川, present-day Zibo 淄博, Shandong province. He styled himself Jianchen 劍臣, and was also known by his literary name Liuquan Jushi 柳泉居士 (Retired Scholar by the Willow Spring). He received his early education at home, reading the Confucian classics and history under the supervision of his father, Pu Pan 蒲槃. One year after he married the second daughter of Liu Guoding 劉國鼎, a petty country intellectual, he sat an examination for young people, and came out first in the county, prefecture, and the circuit<sup>24</sup> as well, and was honoured with the title of "Boshi Diziyuan" 博士弟子員 (government student) at the age of 19. His talent for literature was highly appreciated by Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618-1683) one of the most influential scholars of the time, to whom Pu Songling always felt greatly indebted for his encouragement and appreciation.

However, his early success in the examination and public recognition of his literary talents turned in his later years into bitter memories of past glory after he suffered one after another setback in the civil service examination at the provincial level. He did not give up and tried not to miss any chance of obtaining an officially-

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<sup>20</sup> Written by the great Qing poet Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634-1711), this work has 27 *juan*, of which seven with 399 items are devoted to accounts and tales of the strange and supernatural.

<sup>21</sup> Compiled by Zhang Chao 張潮 (1605-1707), this work is a collectanea of works of fiction in 20 *juan*, many of which are tales in note-jotting form by eminent men of letters of the late Ming and early Qing, such as Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664), Wang Youding 王猷定 (1598-1662), Li Qing 李清 (1602-1683), Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1679?), You Tong 尤侗 (1618-1704), Fang Bao 方苞 (1668-1749), Wang Shizhen, etc.

<sup>22</sup> This work in 10 *juan* was written by Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612-1672) during his term of imprisonment under the Qing. The majority of this 10-*juan* work falls into the category of miscellaneous revelations of, or remarks on, nature and the world, with fictional accounts of the strange and supernatural embedded in between.

<sup>23</sup> This work in 8 *juan*, written by Niu Xiu 鈕琇 (?-1704), is of a miscellaneous nature with anecdotes and accounts of the world mixed with tales of the supernatural.

<sup>24</sup> *Dao* 道 (circuit) refers to an administrative division of a province in former times of China.



recognised academic title. It was not until 1710 when he was 71 that he was granted the title of "Sui Gongsheng" 歲貢生 (tribute student), five years before his death.<sup>25</sup>

Although Pu Songling is best known as the author of LZZY, his talents are not at all limited to *xiaoshuo* writing, and in fact, they cover almost all the areas of literary activities of the time. His diligence and literary genius find their full expression in his more than 1,300 poems and *ci*-poems, more than 450 essays and *liqu* 俚曲 (popular songs), three plays, and five works of miscellaneous writings.<sup>26</sup>

As recorded in "Liuquan Xiansheng Mubiao" 柳泉先生墓表 (Inscription on Mr Liuquan's Tomb Tablet), after a series of frustrations in the civil service examination, Pu Songling sighed with grief: "It is all my fate!" (*qi ming ye fu* 其命也夫).<sup>27</sup> Although he had no intention of giving up hope of realising his political ambition through the civil service examination, he did not cling to it as the only goal of his life. Like many of the Tang failed scholars, Pu Songling turned to the supernatural world, and started a lifelong journey in search of ghosts and spirits. "Although I am not so talented as Gan Bao," (*cai fei Gan Bao* 才非干寶) Pu Songling admits in "Liaozhai Zizhi" 聊齋自志 (The Author's Preface to LZZY), "I am keen on collecting tales and accounts about gods and spirits." (*ya ai sou shen* 雅愛搜神)<sup>28</sup>

He began to write LZZY at around thirty years of age,<sup>29</sup> and carried it for most of the rest of his life.<sup>30</sup> By 1679, he had finished the bulk of the LZZY, and wrote a preface to it in the spring of that year. Due to lack of money, the manuscripts were

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<sup>25</sup> For a detailed account of Pu Songling's life, see Lu Dahuang's 路大荒 *Pu Songling Nianpu* 蒲松齡年譜 (The Chronological Life of Pu Songling), quoted in Pu Songling (1986:1755-1811).

<sup>26</sup> Pu's poems, essays, plays, popular songs, and miscellaneous writings have been collected by Lu Dahuang into a two-volume book under the title of *Pu Songling Ji* 蒲松齡集 (Collected Works of Pu Songling).

<sup>27</sup> Written by Zhang Yuan 張元 in 1725, eleven years after the death of Pu Songling, this inscription is quoted by Lu Dahuang in Pu Songling (1986: 1814-1815) as an appendix to *Pu Songling Ji*.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 134).

<sup>29</sup> Yang Liu 楊柳 (1958: 15), and Ouyang Jian (1997: 479) believe that Pu Songling started to write stories around the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Shunzhi's 順治 reign (1660), when he was 20 years old, but they fail to give any evidence to support this theory. From "Du Zuo Huai Ren" 獨坐懷人 (Homesick While Sitting Alone), a poem written by Pu Songling in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Kangxi's 康熙 reign, Zhang Peiheng 章培恆 (1980: 184) infers that Pu started to write around 1672 and 1673 when he was in his early thirties. For this poem, see Pu Songling (1986: 483-484).

<sup>30</sup> References are made to events happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Emperor Kangxi's reign (1682) in two of his stories, respectively entitled "Zhu Weng" 祝翁 (An Old Man Surnamed Zhu) and "Hu Meng" 狐夢 (Dreaming of a Fox Spirit), and in "Han Fang" 韓方, and "Xia Xue" 夏雪 (Summer Snow) there are references made respectively to the period between the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> years of Emperor Kangxi's reign (1694-1695), and the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor's Kangxi's reign (1707), when Pu Songling was an old man of nearly 70 years old. Zhang Peiheng (1980: 197) believes that Pu Songling did not give up writing stories for LZZY until not long before his death in 1715.



long kept at home rather than sent to press,<sup>31</sup> and circulated among a handful of intellectuals in the form of hand-written versions. Only two of them are extant: one copied by Huang Yanxi 黃炎熙 (fl. 1750) and the other by Zhang Xijie 張希杰 (1689-1761+). Huang's copy, which is kept in the library of Sichuan University, preserves ten *juan* with *Juan* 2 and *Juan* 12 missing from the original one. The latter, which is kept in the library of Peking University, is generally known as "Zhuxuezhai Chaoben LZZY" 鑄雪齋抄本聊齋志異 (The Hand-copied Edition of LZZY from Zhuxue Studio).<sup>32</sup> This 12-*juan* edition was one recopied in 1751 by Zhang Xijie, a native of Licheng 歷城, from the "Dianchun Ting Ben" 殿春亭本 (The Hand-written Copy of LZZY from Dianchun Pavilion).<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, the manuscript of LZZY did not survive in the original,<sup>34</sup> nor did Zhu's hand-written copy, which leaves the Zhuxue Studio Copy by Zhang Xijie the closest one to the original.<sup>35</sup>

For more than half a century from 1679 when the bulk of this collection was finished, LZZY remained in circulation only through transcription. It was not until 1765 that a book-seller surnamed Wang 王 from Hunan 湖南 had it printed on wood-carved blocks.<sup>36</sup> A year later there appeared another wood-block printed copy by Zhao Qigao 趙起杲 (d. 1766). Generally known as "Qingke Ting Ben" 青柯亭本 (The Qingke Pavilion Edition), this edition is claimed in Zhao's "LZZY Bianyan" 聊齋志異弁言 (Preface to LZZY)<sup>37</sup> to be a wood-block printed version of the original manuscript kept by Zheng Lixiang 鄭荔鄉, a native of Min 閩, present-day Fujian Province.<sup>38</sup> This Qingke Edition of LZZY includes 431 items in 16 *juan*. Most regrettably, this edition is irretrievably spoiled by the addition of two items to and the

<sup>31</sup> As noted by Pu Songling's son, Pu Lide 蒲立德, in his "LZZY Ba" 聊齋志異跋 (Afterword to LZZY), which is quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 150-151).

<sup>32</sup> "Zhuxue Zhai" 鑄雪齋 is the name of Zhang Xijie's studio.

<sup>33</sup> The owner of Dianchun Pavilion, who is believed to be a native of Jinan 濟南 by the name of Zhu Chongxun 朱崇勛 (fl. 1720), claims in his "LZZY Ba" 聊齋志異跋 (Afterword to LZZY) that his LZZY was copied in 1723 directly from Pu's original manuscript. For Zhu's "Afterword to LZZY", see Ding Xigen (1996: 149).

<sup>34</sup> Half of LZZY manuscript was found in 1950 in Xifeng 西豐 County of, Liaoning, and a facsimile edition of it was published in 1955 by Wenxue Guji Kanxing She 文學古籍刊行社 in Beijing.

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed evidential study of the Zhuxue Studio Copy and its relationship with the Dianchun Pavilion Copy, see Yuan Shishuo (1980:132-156).

<sup>36</sup> This edition known as "Wangshi Keben" 王氏刻本 (Wang's Wood-block Printed Edition) is lost.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 139-140).

<sup>38</sup> As noted in the postscript by the contemporary scholar Zhang Youhe 張友鶴 to Pu Songling (1978), the original manuscript of LZZY kept by Zheng Lixiang is an earlier version of the manuscript as compared with the one from which Zhu the owner of Dianchun Pavilion copied. This postscript is attached to Pu Songling (1978: 1721-1735).

deletion of forty-eight from the manuscript.<sup>39</sup> In 1963 a modern edition of LZZY was published, generally known as the "Sanhui Ben LZZY" 三會本聊齋志異 (The Three Hui Edition of LZZY).<sup>40</sup> This "Three Hui Edition", with 491 items included in 12 *juan* and 9 attached as appendixes, boasts the most complete edition produced so far of LZZY.

As is the case with other earlier collections of tales of the supernatural, stories in LZZY, as is stated in the author's preface,<sup>41</sup> have their origin either in ancient books, folklore and legends, or hearsay collected by Pu from his fellow villagers, and friends and acquaintances across the country. According to Zhu Yixuan 朱一玄, the "benshi" 本事 (original story) of as many as 143 items in LZZY can be traced back to earlier collections of tales or stories in individual compositions.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, no less than 100 items are said through the mouth of Yishi Shi 異史氏 (Historian of the Strange) to be adapted from folk tales and legends. If Pu Songling had been content only to make a record of what he had seen and heard, there would not be much difference between LZZY and earlier *zhiguai* works of the Six Dynasties. What distinguishes LZZY as one of the greatest classical Chinese works of fiction is an organic combination of the *zhiguai* tradition of the Six Dynasties with the exuberant *chuanqi* style of the Tang dynasty, thus creating a new narrative model termed by Lu Xun as "*zhiguai* stories in the *chuanqi* mode of writing" (*yong chuanqi fa er yi zhi guai* 用傳奇法而以志怪).<sup>43</sup>

LZZY is first and foremost a collection of *zhiguai* tales, with no more than 15% of the work devoted to accounts purely of men and devoid of any supernatural

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<sup>39</sup> An account of the reason for the addition to and deletion of items from the original manuscript is given in the "Li Yan" 例言 (Introductory Remarks) on the Qingke Pavilion Edition of LZZY. For this account, see Pu Songling (1978: 27-28).

<sup>40</sup> The "Three Hui Edition" of LZZY was first published 1963 by Zhonghua Shuju in Shanghai and a second edition of it in 1978 by Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, to which I hereafter refer in my discussion of specific stories in LZZY in this chapter. The Chinese "sanhui" 三會 (three *hui*) here is an abbreviated collective term for "hui jiao" 會校 (collected collations), "hui zhu" 會注 (collected annotations), and "hui ping" 會評 (collected commentaries), which are edited and collected by Zhang Youhe from 14 earlier versions extant of LZZY. For a brief comparative study of these 14 versions of LZZY made by Zhang Youhe, see Pu Songling (1978: 1721-1725). For a detailed comment on the "Three Hui Edition of LZZY, see "Xin Xu" 新序 (A New Preface) written by Zhang Peiheng to Pu Songling (1978: 1-19).

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 134)..

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Ouyang Jian (1997: 478).

<sup>43</sup> Lu Xun (1981:209).

elements.<sup>44</sup> Although items in it vary greatly running from several pages to one line of 25 characters, the majority of them have a length of more than 1,000 characters, much longer than their Six Dynasties' counterparts.<sup>45</sup> The increase of tale text length in LZZY allows the author more space to construct complicated plots and portray characters in detail. Extremely rich in subject matter ranging widely from fairies, fox spirits, ghosts and demons to men and women with supernatural power, LZZY is a *zhiguai* encyclopaedia next to none in the history of classical Chinese supernatural fiction.

The most interesting stories in LZZY are those about romantic encounters and unions of men with fox spirits, the best-known of which is "Jiaona" 嬌娜 (Fox Fairy Jiaona).<sup>46</sup> The story starts with a scholar by the name of Kong Xueli falling into trouble on his way to visit his friend. A man surnamed Huangfu comes to help him out of his predicament and offers him accommodation in his house, where Kong sees Jiaona, and falls in love with her. With Huangfu acting as go-between, Kong eventually marries Ah Song, Jiaona's cousin. It turns out later that the Huangfus are not human beings but fox spirits, and when Huangfu reveals this to Kong, he feels no disgust but comes to their rescue at the risk of his own life. The story ends with a peaceful and harmonious union of the Kong family with the fox family.

Besides fox tales, there are also many well-written stories about extraordinary people. "Hua Bi" 畫壁 (The Mural)<sup>47</sup> and "Laoshan Daoshi" 勞山道士 (The Daoist of Mount Lao)<sup>48</sup> are the most popular of this type. "Hua Bi" tells of a scholar by the name of Zhu who becomes infatuated with a goddess on a wall painting at a monastery when suddenly he finds himself rising and entering the heavenly scene described in the painting, where he is well received by the girl and makes love to her. After he is transferred by an old monk back to reality, Zhu is surprised to find that the girl's hairstyle has changed in the mural. He turns for explanation to the old monk

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<sup>44</sup> According to the Russian Sinologist O.L.Fishman, of 499 items in LZZY, 417 are devoted to accounts of the supernatural, which accounts for 84% of the total number of items in LZZY, as quoted in Boris Riftin (2001: 38-39).

<sup>45</sup> The item entitled "Chi Zi" 赤字 (Red Characters) in *Juan* 7 of LZZY has only 25 characters in it. The *juan* number of LZZY is given hereafter in line with the *juan* arrangement of the "Three Hui Edition" of LZZY.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Pu Songling (1978:57-65).

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Pu Songling (1978:14-17).

<sup>48</sup> Quoted In Pu Songling (1978: 38-41).

in the monastery, who says: "Illusion is human. How can I explain it?" (*huan you ren sheng pin dao he neng jie* 幻由人生 貧道何能解), which leaves Zhu and his friend even more confused as to whether life is illusion or illusion is life.

"Laoshan Daoshi" is about a man named Wang, who leaves home for Mount Lao in the hope of learning Daoist arts and becoming a magician himself. Upon request, a Daoist master teaches Wang the magic art of passing through walls but warns him never to show off and abuse what he has learnt from him. Wang gives no heed to the admonition, and he cannot wait a single minute after he comes home from the mountain to demonstrate to his wife the magical art only to find much to his dismay that the magical art he learnt from the Daoist master does not work any more. Ironically, his attempt to pass through the wall leaves nothing but a bump as large as an egg on his forehead, thus making him a laughing stock in his village rather than a master magician.

Pu Songling inherited the Six Dynasties' *zhiguai* tradition, and carried it a great step forward by developing it to a highly sophisticated level of narration and characterisation never before seen in classical Chinese works of fiction. Although in terms of subject matter, LZZY does not look much different from other collections of strange and supernatural tales, they are narrated in such a vivid and meticulous manner that the strange creatures and supernatural beings appear quite human and approachable. Pu Songling achieves a new degree of realism in treating the supernatural in a human way and by writing in a style at once simple and elegant that vitalises the flimsiest and most hackneyed plots, thus achieving the most perfect union of Six Dynasties' *zhiguai* tradition and Tang *chuanqi* style. His unusual command of the classical language in description and narration and his unsurpassed ability to make the improbable and impossible sound probable and possible rank him among the greatest of classical Chinese fiction writers.

The influence of LZZY upon Qing writers of later generations can never be overestimated. During the life time of Pu Songling, LZZY drew wide attention from scholars. Wang Shizhen, the author of *Chibei Outan*, is said to have offered a huge sum of money for the manuscript of LZZY.<sup>49</sup> There is no convincing evidence

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<sup>49</sup> As quoted in Lu Xun (1981: 218n; nd: 100), records of this are found in *Lengluo Zazhi* 冷燭雜識 (Miscellaneous Records by a Cold Stove) by the Qing scholar Lu Yitian 陸以恬 and in *Tongyin Qinghua* 桐陰清話 (Pure Talk under the Shadow of a Wutong Tree) by Ni Hong 倪鴻.

available to support this account, but one thing is certain: Wang Shizhen, the most distinguished poet of the time, composed a poem in praise of LZZY, and helped spread the fame of LZZY across the country.<sup>50</sup> The following century witnessed collections of supernatural tales written, inspired by or in imitation of LZZY appearing one after another.

Representative of them are *Zi Bu Yu* 子不語 (What Confucius Would Not Say, hereafter ZBY), and *Yuewei Caotang Biji* 閱微草堂筆記 (Random Jottings at the Thatched Abode of Close Observations, hereafter YWCTBJ), *Xie Duo* 諧鐸 (Harmonious Bells),<sup>51</sup> *Yingchuang Yicao* 螢窗異草 (Strange Grass by the Firefly-lit Window),<sup>52</sup> *Yetan Suilu* 夜譚隨錄 (Casual Records of Night Talk),<sup>53</sup> *Xiaodou Peng* 小豆棚 (The Shed of Little Beans),<sup>54</sup> and *Yeyu Qiudeng Lu* 夜雨秋燈錄 (Records under a Candlelight on Autumn Rainy Nights).<sup>55</sup> The best-known among these works are ZBY by Yuan Mei 袁枚 and YWCTBJ by Ji Yun.

- Yuan Mei and his *Zi Bu Yu*

Yuan Mei (1716-1797), whose courtesy name was Zicai 子才, styled himself Jianzhai 簡齋, and was also known by his literary name Cangshan Jushi 倉山居士 (Resident at Mt. Cang) and Suiyuan Laoren 隨園老人 (An Old Man of the Garden of Complacency). He was born to a poor intellectual family, but thanks to his diligence, he obtained the academic title of *xiuca*i at the age of 12. At the age of 23, he passed the civil service examination and became a *jinshi* scholar in 1739, and was then elected to the *Hanlin Yuan*. In the years that followed, he was appointed county magistrate successively in Lishui 麗水, Jiangpu 江浦, MUYANG 沐陽, and Jiangning 江寧, all in Jiangsu Province.

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<sup>50</sup> For this poem, see Lu Xun (nd:100).

<sup>51</sup> Written by Shen Qifeng 沈起鳳 (?1741-1801), this work 12 *juan* contains 122 items in.

<sup>52</sup> Written by Changbai Haogezhi 長百浩歌子, which is thought to be a pen-name of the Manchu writer Yin Qinglan 尹慶蘭 (?1735-1788), who is alternatively called Yin Sicun 尹似村, this work extant in 12 *juan* contain about 150 items

<sup>53</sup> Written by the Manchu story-teller He Bang'e 和邦額 (fl. 1775), this work in 12 *juan* contains more than 140 items, around 100 of which are stories in *chuanqi* style.

<sup>54</sup> Written by Zeng Yandong 曾衍東 (1751-1830), this work in 8 *juan* includes 215 items.

<sup>55</sup> Written by the late Qing scholar Xuan Ding 宣鼎 (1835-1880?), items included in the 8-*juan* work number 230 items.



Being unconventional and unrestrained by nature, Yuan Mei soon grew tired of bureaucracy and officialdom. At the age of 40, he resigned his post, settled down in Jiangning, present-day Nanjing 南京, and built for himself at the foot of Mt. Xiaocang 小倉山 a house with a garden he named "Suiyuan" 隨園 (the Garden of Complacency). Yuan Mei was an extremely diligent and prolific writer, and the most important poet in the middle of the Qing. Besides ZBY, he also left behind after his death *Xiaocang Shanfang Wenji* 小倉山房文集 (Collected Writings from the Studio of Mt. Xiaocang) in 35 *juan*, *Xiaocang Shanfang Shiji* 小倉山房詩集 (Collected Poems from the Studio of Mt. Xiaocang) in 37 *juan*, and *Suiyuan Shihua* 隨園詩話 (Poetry Talks from the Garden of Complacency) in 16 *juan*.

ZBY is a collection of tales of the strange and supernatural, composed in Yuan Mei's later years. He first entitled this work "Zi Bu Yu",<sup>56</sup> and later changed it to *Xin Qi Xie* 新齊諧 (A New Collection of Tales by Qi Xie) to avoid confusion with a Yuan work of the same title, as noted by Yuan Mei in his "Xin Qi Xie Xu" 新齊諧序 (Preface to *A New Collection of Tales by Qi Xie*).<sup>57</sup> Since the Yuan ZBY has long been lost, Yuan Mei's work is today more often than not referred to as ZBY. ZBY has two parts, with the first part containing 24 *juan* and the second one 10 *juan*, which is known as *Xu ZBY* 續子不語 (A Sequel to ZBY). The items in ZBY add up to more than 1,200 altogether, but a considerable number of them are no more than random note jottings, short and witty without much of plot involved. Of the 1023 items investigated by O.L. Fishman, 931 are concerned with supernatural beings and abnormal happenings, making up as much as 90% of the total text today.<sup>58</sup>

Although well versed in the Confucian classics and very successful in the civil service examinations, Yuan Mei turned out to be rather cynical and critical about orthodox conventions and traditional values. His defiance of orthodoxy and departure from the classics are reflected in the irony-laden title of his collection, and finds their

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<sup>56</sup> The words "zi bu yu" 子不語 are taken from the Shu'er 述而 Chapter of the *Analects*, where Confucius is quoted as saying against "talking of prodigies, feats of strength, disorder, and gods and spirits" (*zi bu yu guai li luan shen* 子不語怪力亂神).

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 155-156).

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Boris Riftin (2001: 38-39).



fullest expression in a story entitled "Zibuyu Niangniang" 子不語娘娘 (Lady Zibuyu).<sup>59</sup>

This story starts with a fairy appearing of her own accord and offering to marry Liu Rui, a village man who lives on selling chickens. Believing that he must have encountered a "guai" 怪 (monster/spirit), Liu Rui tries to avoid her lest he incur harm to himself, but he soon realises to his relief that the *guai*, without the slightest evil intention of harming him, is predestined to help him. In a year, the fairy gives birth to a son for Liu and with her help he soon becomes well off and lives a happy life. When the time comes for his fairy wife to take her leave, she leaves behind a wooden carved figure named Zibuyu for Liu Rui to place at home to worship, saying that Zibuyu will answer his every call for help, and will bless and protect his household. Liu Rui seems reluctant to accept it at first, saying: "Being so named, it must be a *guai*, but how can I keep a *guai* at home and worship her?"

His fairy wife says, "I am also a *guai*. Why have you been able to treat me as your wife over these years? All things are different from each other. There are human beings who are not so good as us supernatural beings and there are supernatural beings who are better by nature than human beings. You cannot look at things only from the point of view of you human beings." Liu Rui is eventually persuaded to keep the carved figure. He offers sacrifices to Lady Zibuyu, and worships her as a goddess so that he can still enjoy a happy and wealthy life with his son after the departure of his immortal wife.

This story seems to be an account of miracles performed by supernatural beings and romantic encounters between men and spirits, but there is more to it than that. Through the mouth of the fairy wife, Yuan Mei makes the message unmistakably clear that humans are no superior to non-humans, and it is not that we are frightened by ghosts and spirits but that we frighten ourselves because of our ignorance of and prejudice against them.

Yuan's criticism of traditional values and Neo-Confucianism (*lixue* 理學) is threaded through this work and constitutes the most important theme of ZBY. He writes about ghosts, spirits, and men (mostly Daoist practitioners and Buddhist

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted in *Juan 2* of *Xu ZBY*. The *juan* number in ZBY is given hereafter in line with that in Yuan Mei (1986).

monks) with supernatural power not out of his genuine interest in them but out of the need to attack corruption in society and satirise pedantic Confucians under the guise of the supernatural. Traces can be found throughout this work of biting derision of Confucian scholars, Daoist priests and Buddhist monks under the guise of talking about the strange and supernatural. As the author admits in "Yu Zhang Sima Shu" 與張司馬書 (A letter to Zhang Sima), "By nature I do not like Buddha, immortals, or Neo-Confucianism." (*pu shengxing bu xi fo bu xi xian jian bu xi lixue* 僕生性不喜佛不喜仙兼不喜理學)<sup>60</sup>

"Sheng Linji" 盛林基<sup>61</sup> is a bitter satire against Buddhism and Confucianism. Sheng Linji, a pious Buddhist and devoted son, cuts off his mother and sister's heads with a kitchen knife in order to "fulfil his filial duty" (*jin xiaodao* 盡孝道). When he is taken to the execution ground, he feels no regret. Instead, he takes great pride and pleasure in extricating them from this evil world of mortals, and sending them on the way to "the Land of Ultimate Bliss" (*Jile Shijie* 極樂世界), where they will become Bodhisattvas and enjoy an eternal life.

Sardonic about corrupt Daoist priests and officials is "Lian Dan Daoshi" 煉丹道士 (The Daoist Priest Who Makes Pills of Immortality),<sup>62</sup> where Yuan Mei gives a vivid account of how an unscrupulous Daoist magician swindles one million taels of silver out of a corrupt official after tricking him into believing that the silver is being used to make pills of immortality. The story ends with a message left by the Daoist priest for the official, saying that what has been done is in his interest, for the wealth he has accumulated by taking bribes will be used to atone for his crimes.

"Qilin Hanyuan" 麒麟喊冤 (A Chinese Unicorn Complaining at the Heavenly Court)<sup>63</sup> is also a satire with criticism directed this time at Song-Ming Neo-Confucians and the Han school of classic philologists. A scholar by the name of Qiu first learns from Neo-Confucians but soon gives up his study with them after realising that "Song Confucians have failed me." (*Song ru wu wo* 宋儒誤我). He then turns to textual research of the classics. One day when he is studying commentaries to the *Li Ji* 禮記 (The Book Of Rites) by a tree in a valley, a tiger

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<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Miao Zhuang (1998: 364).

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in *Juan 6* of *Xu ZBY*.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in *Juan 2* of *ZBY*.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in *Juan 5* of *Xu ZBY*.

comes and takes him to "The Palace of Civilisation" (*wenming dian* 文明殿), where he meets with a scholar in ancient clothes.

The scholar tells Qiu two stories, one about a *qilin* 麒麟 (Chinese unicorn) crying out about the wrong done to his species owing to the ridiculous commentaries made by Han Confucians on the Confucian classics and the other about four Song Confucians carrying a "rice bucket" (*daotong* 稻桶)<sup>64</sup> on the order of the Heavenly Emperor. In terms of theme, "Qilin Hanyuan" shows little difference from other satires in this collection, but what is interesting to us is the metaphorical references made through the two embedded stories to Song Confucians as "straw bags" (*caobao* 草包)<sup>65</sup> and "rice buckets", and Han Confucians as liars and swindlers who falsified classics in their commentaries, spreading fallacies and creating unjust cases against men and animals alike.

- Ji Yun and his *Yuewei Caotang Bijì*

YWCTBJ is one of the most influential Qing collections of tales of the strange and supernatural written in the note-jotting form, for which Ji Yun the author is ranked with Pu Songling and Yuan Mei as one of the "Three Great Writers" (*san da jia* 三大家) of the Qing. Ji Yun, who styled himself Guanyi Daoren 觀弈道人 (A Monk Watching Chess Games) and was also known by his courtesy name as Ji Xiaolan 季曉嵐, was a native of Xian 獻 County in present-day Hebei Province. He took a first in the civil service examination at the provincial level, and became a *jueren* scholar at the age of 24. In 1721, Ji Yun came out second in the national-level civil service examination, was awarded the academic title of *jinshi*, and then invited to the *Hanlin Yuan*. As a reward for his contribution to compiling SKQS, and also out of admiration for his broad knowledge, Ji Yun was later appointed "Libu Shangshu" 禮部尚書 (Secretary of the Rites Ministry), and soon afterwards promoted to the position of "Xieban Daxueshi" 協辦大學士 (Deputy Secretary General). After his death at the age of 82, he was honoured with the posthumous title of "Wenda" 文達

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<sup>64</sup> The Chinese word "稻桶", which sounds the same as "道統" (Confucian orthodox), is used as a pun, referring to orthodox Confucians as "fantong" 飯桶 (rice bucket), a Chinese idiomatic expression for people who are good for nothing.

<sup>65</sup> This Chinese idiomatic expression is a synonym for "fantong".

(Literary Prominence). He is best remembered as the chief compiler of SKQS, and ZMTY. After his death, his prose writings and poems were collected into the 32-juan *Ji Wenda Gong Yiji* 紀文達公遺集 (A Posthumous Collection of Works of Ji Wenda).

YWCTBJ is actually composed of five books: "Luanyang Xiaoxia Lu" 潞陽消夏錄 (Summer Notes from Luanyang) in 6 *juan*, "Ru Shi Wo Wen" 如是我聞 (As I Have Heard) in 4 *juan*, "Huaixi Zazhi" 槐西雜誌 (Miscellaneous Records at Huaixi House) in 4 *juan*, "Gu Wang Ting Zhi" 姑妄聽之 (Believe It or Not) in 4 *juan* and "Luanyang Xulu" 潞陽續錄 (A Sequel to *Summer Notes from Luanyang*) in 6 *juan*. This 24-juan work, which took Ji Yun nine years (1789-1798) to finish, first appeared in individual books. Two years after he completed the last book, "Luanyang Xulu", a pupil of his by the name of Sheng Shiyan 盛時彥 put the five books together into a single work and sent it to press under the title of YWCTBJ.<sup>66</sup>

YWCTBJ is typical of a *xiaoshuo* work in note-jotting form: short and pithy, largely based on what has been seen and heard. Ji Yun preferred concision and simplicity prevalent in *zhiguai* works of the Six Dynasties to the sumptuousness and embellishment popular with Tang *chuanqi* writers. He was quoted by Sheng Shiyan in his "Afterword to Gu Wang Ting Zhi" as claiming that, unlike dramas which could be altered or adapted while being performed on stage, *xiaoshuo*, as a record of what one has seen and heard, allowed no room for creation and imagination.<sup>67</sup> His preference for a simple and concise style and insistence on a faithful record of what one sees and hears lead him to taking a different path from Pu Songling. As noted in his preface to "Gu Wang Ting Zhi", Ji Yun modelled himself on Tao Yuanming, and Liu Yiqing "so as not to deviate from the original simplicity and morality" (*da zhi qi bu guai yu feng jiao* 大旨期不乖於風教) of Six Dynasties' *xiaoshuo* writings.<sup>68</sup> In his eyes, Pu Songling was no more than a "talented scholar" (*caizi* 才子), and did not deserve the title of "writer" (*zhushu zhe* 著書者). Ji Yun criticised Pu of making up

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<sup>66</sup> "Yuewei Caotang" 閱微草堂 (The Thatched Abode of Close Observations) was the name of Ji Yun's studio in his official mansion located at Hufang Qiao 虎坊橋, Beijing.

<sup>67</sup> For this quotation, see Ji Yun (1980: 472)

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Ding Xigen (1996: 181).

fantastic stories and "mixing up two different modes of writing in one book." (*yi shu er jian er ti* 一書而兼二體), and denied LZZY entry to SKQS.<sup>69</sup>

Although anecdotes about men are dotted here and there in this work, JYCTBJ is primarily a *zhiguai* work and items concerned with gods, ghosts, devils and fox spirits, and other strange beings in it amount to 962, accounting for 80% of the total number.<sup>70</sup> It is not certain whether or not Ji Yun wrote YWCTBJ to emulate Yuan's ZBY, but when compared, these two works have much in common in condemning the hypocritical side of Neo-Confucianism and satirising corrupt and sanctimonious religious men.

As an eminent scholar official well versed in the Confucian classics, Ji Yun possesses a rather complex character and defies any clear-cut analysis of his personality and beliefs. We cannot conclude that Ji Yun was a conservative scholar simply because of his conservative attitudes towards the genre of *xiaoshuo*. In fact, in his discussions on religion, superstition and Confucianism, he displays a certain liberalism.

As he declared through the mouth of Governor Xu Jingzeng 徐景曾, an influential Confucian scholar of his time, "I have faith in Buddhism but not in monks; I have faith in sages and scholars of virtue but not in Neo-Confucianism." (*wo xin fo bu xin seng xin shengxian bu xin dao xue* 我信佛不信僧信聖賢不信道學).<sup>71</sup> On the one hand, he propagates the Buddhist theory of *samsara*, admonishing men about the divine retribution ruling their chances of being reborn in the human world, or of being reincarnated as an "other being" (*yi lei* 異類) such as pigs, foxes, and snakes in the next life. On the other hand, he is open-minded towards the other beings represented by fox spirits, claiming through the mouth of a fox spirit: "Nature gives birth to all things under Heaven, and gives names to them according to their species... We are like humans, with the beautiful and the ugly, and the good and the

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Ji Yun (1980: 472). For more about Ji Yun's criticism of LZZY, see Lu Xun (1981: 212) and Leo Tak-hung Chan (1998: 161-166, 181).

<sup>70</sup> Items in Ji Yun (1980) total 1196 with 6 items written by his son Ji Ruji 紀汝佺 attached to it. According to O.L.Fishman, there are 962 items dealing with supernatural beings and happenings, which account for 80% of the 1193 items in YWCTBJ. For a brief introduction to Fishman's comparative study of LZZY, ZBY, and YWCTBJ, see Boris Riftin (2001: 38-39).

<sup>71</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 433).



bad intermingled...and they have man's prime wants: food, drink and sex, and also the lot of man: birth, ageing, sickness, and death."<sup>72</sup>

Ji Yun had a strong sense of social justice, and spared no effort to attack degenerate officials, Confucian scholars and Daoist/Buddhist followers, for their greediness and hypocrisy. Possibly due to his disappointment about the corrupt and ineffective legal system in this world, Ji Yun had them brought to justice in the supernatural world. Such a theme is best shown in "Xianli Wangmou" 縣吏王某 (Wang, a County Clerk),<sup>73</sup> and "Qingxian Xianling" 青縣縣令 (The Magistrate of Qing County)<sup>74</sup>, the former being about a government official who has accumulated great fortunes by force and fraud only to lose them all miraculously and die without a single penny left to buy a coffin for himself, while the latter telling of an unscrupulous county magistrate's setting free a prisoner who has been sentenced to death, after his teenage son offers himself to be sexually abused by the magistrate.

Ji Yun seems not to have had much trust in Daoist priests and Buddhist monks, and showed no sympathy while exposing the greediness and lustfulness of corrupt religious men. The story "Shusheng yu Hunü" 書生與狐女 (A Young Scholar and a Fox Fairy)<sup>75</sup> is about an innocent young scholar and a tender-hearted fox spirit, who love each other so deeply that they cannot bear even a moment's separation. The fox spirit gives her lover a gourd to carry her in wherever he goes. One day when the scholar is wandering around a market, he suddenly finds the gourd gone from his girdle. It turns out to have been stolen by a Daoist priest. After the seizure of the gourd, the Daoist priest forces a pill of immortality out of the fox spirit with the threat of "sucking all the energy out of her" (*cailian jingqi* 採煉精氣).<sup>76</sup> Without the pill, the fox spirit loses all the power she has accumulated through three hundred years of "cultivation" (*xiulian* 修煉), and is forced to reveal her original self as a fox: she is thus unable to take on human form to continue her love with the scholar. The

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<sup>72</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 216).

<sup>73</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 8). There is no title given for individual items in YWCTBJ, but for the convenience of discussion, titles will be added, according to the content, to items to be discussed.

<sup>74</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 437).

<sup>75</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 337).

<sup>76</sup> It is believed that to obtain longevity and immortality, Daoist priests tend to obtain the *yin* 陰 energy through sexual intercourse with females, which is called "cai yin bu yang" 採陰補陽, and fox spirits to obtain the *yang* 陽 energy through sexual intercourse with men, which is called "cai yang bu yin" 採陽補陰.



Daoist priest comes to no good: rather than attain immortality, he is killed by thunder some years later.

In YWCTBJ, there are many stories of satire against Neo-Confucians. Most interesting of them are "You Seng" 游僧 (An Itinerant Monk)<sup>77</sup> and "Liang Shushi" 兩塾師 (Two Private Tutors).<sup>78</sup> The first is about a tutor in an old style private school. One day when he is teaching Neo-Confucianism to his pupils, a travelling monk appears at the door, begging for food while beating his *muyu* 木魚 (wooden fish).<sup>79</sup> Very annoyed, the tutor drives him away, saying, "this is a holy place for us disciples of sages and scholars of virtue only and not for you heretics." The monk retorts, claiming that there is no difference between monks begging for food and clothes and Confucians seeking wealth and power, and they are no better than each other in that they have all lost sight of their original principles. Enraged at his "blasphemy against Confucianism", the tutor dashes out at the monk with a birch in his hand. The monk runs away, leaving behind a cloth bag full of coins. Unable to resist the temptation, the teacher instructs his pupils to count the coins in the bag before dividing the money with them. They open the bag and are about to count the money when suddenly a swarm of wasps rush out to sting the tutor and his pupils. They are running about and crying for help when the monk comes back unexpectedly and takes his bag away, leaving the Confucian scholar a laughing stock in the face of his neighbours.

The second story is about two tutors who claim to be devout followers of Neo-Confucianism. One day they are discussing and debating about human nature and moral principles in the presence of their pupils when suddenly a gust of wind blows up from nowhere and with it comes flying a sheet of paper. One of their pupils picks it up and finds written on it their secret plot on how to trick a widow out of her property. Their conspiracy is thus exposed.

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<sup>77</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 34-35).

<sup>78</sup> Ji Yun (1980: 78).

<sup>79</sup> *Muyu* is a percussion instrument made of a hollow wooden block, originally used by Buddhist monks to beat rhythm while chanting scriptures.

- Conclusion

In the above five chapters, we have conducted a diachronic survey of *zhiguai* literature, exploring the origin of this genre, tracing its history of development through dynasties, and examining representative tales from major *zhiguai* works in terms of theme and content. Over more than two thousand years, as we have seen, classical Chinese supernatural fiction went through several distinct stages of development. The first stage started from the early Warring States period (403-22BC) and lasted about six hundred years until the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220AD). At the first stage, the *zhiguai* in embryo existed mainly in the form of myths, fables, legends, and parables, and *zhiguai* writings at this stage were not recorded in a systematic way in any work, and as a result, many of them are extant only in the form of fragments and excerpts in ancient historical, philosophical, and miscellaneous works like the *Zhuangzi*, the *Liezi*, the *Huainanzi*, and above all in *SHJ*.

The Six Dynasties was a time when *zhiguai* emerged and took shape as an independent genre of *xiaoshuo* writings. The Wei and Jin dynasties witnessed a great interest in collecting and compiling *zhiguai* tales. This practice was very common then and extended into the next period — the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties. The most representative *zhiguai* work of this time is Gan Bao's *SSJ*, which had a huge influence upon *zhiguai* writers of later generations.

The Tang and Five Dynasties was a turning point in the history of *zhiguai* literature. With many prominent men of letters going in for creating stories, Tang fiction of the supernatural, in general, was no longer written and read as historical records of strange happenings, but well-structured mature stories with interesting plots and vivid characters, often several hundred words in length. *Zhiguai* fiction of the Song Dynasty showed a strong influence of Tang tales of the strange and magic, but taken as a whole, hardly attained the Tang level in terms of expression and imagination. After Song, *zhiguai* literature experienced a decline under the Jin and Yuan dynasties. Few works of supernatural fiction were produced then, and of the very few *zhiguai* works, many were simply reproductions or recompilations of earlier tales.

This situation improved in the early Ming dynasty (1368-1644) mainly with the publication of "Jiandeng" series of *zhiguai* works. Although Ming was a time when fiction in classical Chinese was for the first time outnumbered by fiction in vernacular, the *zhiguai* tradition still continued to develop, and eventually reached its climax in the early Qing with the appearance of Pu Songling's *LZZY*, the most popular and influential *zhiguai* work in the history of Chinese literature.

After Yuan Mei and Ji Yun, while supernatural tales in literary language continued to be written, they were seldom the colourful and robust accounts with a keen sense of wonder as demonstrated in *LZZY*. And indeed the prevailing rational outlook and carefully inculcated philosophical temper, as revealed in *ZBY* and especially in *YWCTBJ*, prove to be a huge hindrance to further development of this genre of fictional writings. In the late years of Qing classical Chinese tales, response to the strange and the supernatural became quite stereotyped; fantasy was confined by a body of traditional lore, with inventions limited to the incidental and peripheral; and the prose style lacked both the liveliness and zest of Pu Songling, and the elegance and wisdom of Yuan Mei and Ji Yun. Having experienced more than two thousand years' rise and fall, the sun of classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural sank into history after shedding its last glow towards the end of the Qing dynasty.

## Part Two: Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction from a Proppian Perspective

### Chapter Six: Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*: a Brief Survey

- Vladimir Propp (1895–1970)<sup>1</sup>

Vladimir Propp was born in St. Petersburg in 1895 to a family of German origin. His Russian-German intercultural background led him to German and Slavonic studies at the University of St. Petersburg. He graduated in 1918 with a diploma in Russian philology, and then began his life-long teaching career. He taught German and Russian at various secondary schools and technological institutions until 1932 when he was appointed a member of staff at the University of Leningrad (formerly the University of St. Petersburg).

His interest in folklore came along with his study of German and Russian at university. While teaching and compiling language textbooks for secondary school students, he was engaged in Russian folktale study and published extensively in this field. His epoch-making work, *Morphology of the Folktale*,<sup>2</sup> which was published in 1928, helped establish Propp as a leading folklorist in the USSR. He was promoted to the professorship of folklore in 1938 and retained the chair until the folklore department was reorganised into the department of Russian Literature.

Vladimir Propp is generally considered to belong to the Russian formalist school of linguistics and literary criticism. His revolutionary contribution to folklore study is reflected in *Morphology*, which, unfortunately, did not draw immediate attention from folklorists. For almost three decades, Propp remained a largely unknown figure in folklore and narratology outside Russia and Slavic countries. This situation changed almost overnight with the appearance of the English version of *Morphology* in 1958.

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<sup>1</sup> In writing this section, I consulted Alan Dundes (1968: xi-xvii), Pamela J. Milne (1988: 19-20), Insidor Levin (1967: 32-49), Anatoly Liberman (1984: ix-ixxxi), and V.N. Toporov (1985: 252-271).

<sup>2</sup> The title *Morphology of the Folktale*, hereafter abbreviated to *Morphology*, is misleading in that tales selected for morphological analysis in it are only one kind of folktale, that is, fairy tales or magic tales numbered 300-749 on the Aarne-Thompson (1911; 1961) tale type index. This book had been originally entitled *Morphology of the Wondertale*, which was changed by the editor into the present title to make the book more attractive, as noted in Propp (1984: 70).

Since then, there have been increasing attempts to apply the Proppian methodology and model to the analysis of narrative texts. Indebted to Propp for his seminal ideas are such prominent scholars as Lévi-Strauss, Alan Dundes, Claude Bremond, A. Greimas, Maureen Ann McGowan, and Pamela J. Milne. Thus, Propp's impact has now gone well beyond folklore scholarship and expanded into linguistics, anthropology, mythology, biblical exegesis, and literary criticism.

- Propp's morphological approach to the fairy tale

Morphology refers to the study of the size, shape, and structure of animals, plants, and micro-organisms and the relationships of their internal parts. This term was coined in 1800 by Karl Friedrich Burdach (1776-1847) for his study of biology, and was later developed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) into a branch of science devoted to "the systematic study of formation, transformation — whether of rocks, clouds, colours, plants, animals, or the cultural phenomena of human society — as these present themselves to sentient experience."<sup>3</sup>

The earliest recorded use of morphology as a linguistic term, however, dates back to 1860s.<sup>4</sup> The German equivalent for it is *Formenlehre* (study of forms), which better explains the nature of morphology as a linguistic term for the study of the internal construction of words. As a scholar of German origin and student of the German language and Slavic philology, Vladimir Propp (1968: xxv) is fully aware of a parallel relationship between linguistics and biology in terms of form study, which leads him to a belief in the possibility "to make an examination of the forms of tales which will be as exact as the morphology of organic formations," as botanists look at "the component parts of a plant, of their relationship to each other and to the whole".

A language as a structured system is a self-contained whole, capable of structural analysis and classification.<sup>5</sup> Tales are also a self-sufficient structured entity, composed of linguistic items, so linguistic structural principles should hold

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<sup>3</sup> For a historical survey of this science, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 12, pp. 451-453. For the role of Burdach and Goethe in the introduction and establishment of morphology as a science, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 8, p. 229, and *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, Vol. 3, p. 480, and Vol. 12, p.808.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief account of the history of morphology as a linguistic term, see Matthews (1991: 2-3).

<sup>5</sup> For more about this structuralist principle in linguistics, see Saussure (1983: 8-17).

true in one way or another for the principles governing the construction of a tale. "A living language," Propp (1968: 15) argues, "is a concrete fact — grammar in its abstract substratum. These substrata lie at the basis of a great many phenomena of life, and it is precisely to this that science turns its attention. Not a single concrete fact can be explained without the studying of the abstract bases." An important goal for a folklorist is therefore to work out such a grammatical system underlying folktales through an accurate "description of the folktale according to its component parts and the relationship of those parts to each other and to the whole." It is this that Propp (1968: 19) means by his morphological study of fairy tales, and a morphological analysis so defined will therefore involve two tasks: to isolate basic elements necessary to form a tale and to identify them in terms of their relationship to each other within the tale. This method of structural analysis of folktales fits well in with the modern trends of linguistics originating from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand Saussure's (1916) *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, in which the author declares that "Language should be studied, not only in terms of its individual parts, and not only diachronically, but also in terms of the relationship *between* those parts, and *synchronically*."<sup>6</sup>

As a structural linguist does with componential analysis of language, Propp firstly divides a folktale into component parts in terms of plot actions and identifies them by the role they play and the position they occupy in the tale. He defines the basic components in a tale as functions of the *dramatis personae* of the tale, which the American folklorist Alan Dundes (1964: 50) interprets as "an action of one of a folktale's *dramatis personae* considered without regard for the specific actor performing the action."

Propp (1968:19-20) presents four "events" to illustrate his idea about the relationship between functions and actors, and constants and variables:

1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives Súčenko a horse. The horse carries Súčenko away to another kingdom.

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Terence Hawkes (1977: 20). As to whether Vladimir Propp had been influenced or inspired by Saussure, we do not know because there is no mention whatsoever of Saussure or his work in Propp's writings, although there is much in common between Propp and Saussure in their views of binary oppositions in linguistic structures.



3. A sorcerer gives Iván a little boat. The boat takes him to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Iván away to another kingdom, and so forth.

As shown in the four events, actions or functions of the *dramatis personae* remain unchanged except for their names, motivations, and attributes. Propp terms the tale elements which remain unchanged *constants* as opposed to the *variables* such as the names, attributes and motivations of the characters, and gives first priority to the *constants* over the *variables* in his morphological analysis.

Encouraged by his discovery that a tale tends to attribute identical actions to various characters, Propp attempts to establish a universal structure within the folktale genre based on the *constants*, namely, functions of the *dramatis personae*. The morphological analysis of a tale is thus to extract the functions and define them in line with what is done by the *dramatis personae* in a tale rather than with how it is done or who does it. The definition of a function is given in *Morphology* mostly in the form of a noun expressing an action (interdiction, interrogation, fight, victory, etc.) from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action.

Propp selects for morphological analysis Russian fairytales numbered 50-151 in *Russkie Narodnye Skazki* (Russian Folktales) collected by A.N.Afanas'ev. From a comparative study of these one hundred Russian fairy tales, Propp (1968: 21-23) comes to the following conclusions:

1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.
2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.
3. The sequence of functions is always identical.
4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.

The first conclusion is a further explanation of what functions are and what role they play in the construction of a tale text. The second conclusion is made on the basis of extensive investigation into the corpus, from which Propp (1984: 74) extracts 31 functions "through the comparison, juxtaposition, and identification of hundreds and thousands of cases." Although small in number, the high frequency of their recurrence throughout the one hundred fairytale texts convinces Propp that this

limited number of functions can generate an infinite number of tales if they are constructed according to the same law as in the fairy tale in folklore. The recurrence of the functions does not mean that all 31 functions appear at the same time in the same tale. In fact, no single fairy tale in the corpus contains all of the functions, although it is possible for a tale to be composed of all the 31 functions.

Once the functions are identified and their number is counted, the next question to be considered is whether there is a law governing the order of their appearance in a tale. The answer given by Propp to this question is affirmative. The sequence of events is law-governed, so are short stories, as organic formations are, which accounts for a high degree of compositional uniformity found with the fairytale texts analysed. The fact that "theft cannot take place before the door is forced" leads Propp (1968: 22) to the belief that the sequence of functions is strictly uniform and always identical.

The morphological analysis designed by Propp is not an end in itself but a means to reach his goal of working out the grammatical system underlying all the fairytales. Detailed comparative studies of functions and the order of their appearance in a fairy tale convince Propp of the existence of such a grammatical system underlying all fairy tales. He calls such a system the compositional scheme, which is delineated as the sequence of functions as given in the tale itself. Although the compositional scheme has no real existence in the world of tales, just as all general abstract concepts have no existence in the world of things, Propp believes (1984: 74-75) that it can help us explore the narrative world of tales, discover its laws, and learn to understand and appreciate it.

Of the four conclusions drawn by Propp from the Russian fairytales, the third one that the sequence of functions is always identical is perhaps the most controversial, and has drawn frequent criticisms and challenges. Archer Taylor (1964: 126) points out that quite a few Russian fairy tales investigated by Propp display a sequence in which intermediary functions designated as DEF in *Morphology*, among others, appear out of sequence, and quite often functions DEF occur before plot complication functions designated as ABC, and that these variations obviously break the rule set by Propp himself. Propp does notice such variations in his data, but he (1968: 108) maintains that they will not lead to the

invalidation of his conclusions concerning the typological unity and morphological kinship of fairy tales. Rather, Propp (1968: 107) regards the occurrence of DEF before ABC as "*inverted (obraščennyj)* sequence", a kind of "fluctuation" which does not constitute a new compositional scheme or a new axis. Far from being content with Propp's explanation about these deviations, Archer Taylor (1964: 126) questions Propp as to "whether tales beginning with DEF are a variety of the hypothetical original or are accidental variations with no importance."

Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch (1977) also raise doubts about Propp's "law of the fixed order of functions". Propp (1968: 99) claims that in a fairy tale some functions can be absent from the story, and some repeated in it, and that these various forms do not affect the fixed order of the functions. Taunting the absention and repetition of certain functions in a fairy tale as Propp's two "escape clauses", Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch believe that the two escape clauses do affect the law of the fixed order on the grounds that they, at least theoretically, allow the law of fixed order of functions to be also applied to fairy tales with an inverted order, that is, fairy tales which begin with function 31 to end with function 1. They (1977: 28) conclude by citing Guépin that "the two escape clauses of the deletion and repetition of functions make the law of the fixed order unfalsifiable".

Of all the criticisms of Propp's third conclusion, the strongest has come from Bertel Nathhorst, who (1969: 24-27) lists eight reasons for his objection to this conclusion, and denounces it as unsupportable because of the variations, and therefore, it has to be totally rejected as unfounded.<sup>7</sup>

Pamela J. Milne (1988: 94) does not agree with Nathhorst's total rejection of Propp's thesis. On the one hand, she points out that the questions and doubts raised about Propp's claim for identical sequence of functions seem to be substantiated by the data in his corpus; on the other hand, she argues that Propp has grounds in his data for his argument that there is some regularity to the ways in which the sequence is disrupted. Based on her own observation of biblical tales of magic, Milne (1988: 95) comes up with a modified version of Propp's third conclusion:

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<sup>7</sup> Nathhorst (1969: 23) regards the third conclusion Propp drew from his material as the main thesis upon which the other three depend. If it were incorrect, the other three could not be correct, and so likewise neither would be the morphological framework he had constructed.

While there is evidence of only one compositional scheme, one axis, for all tales belonging to the heroic fairy tale genre, a limited amount of variation in the sequence of functions is permitted within the scheme. This variation does not involve functions other than the thirty-one identified by Propp: it involves only certain changes in the order of the thirty-one functions.

Milne's modification overcomes the deficiency of Propp's observation, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of his morphological system, and is therefore more constructive than Nathhorst's total denunciation of it as "incorrect".

- Propp's morphological model for the fairy tale

Propp's morphological model for the fairy tale contains some 31 functions. As the functions and the compositional scheme are abstractions generated from specific tales, each of the 31 functions is presented in *Morphology* with a concise explanation of its essence, a one-word definition, and a conventional sign to stand for the function, followed by text examples from which the function is extracted.

Propp's functions of *dramatis personae* are arranged logically and chronologically into five sequential sections, with the first seven functions forming what Propp (1968: 31) calls the "preparatory section". Propp observes that a fairy tale usually starts with an enumeration of family members or a brief introduction to the setting or to future heroes. The initial situation which is designated as "α" in Propp (1968: 26) is recognised as an important morphological element but not counted as a function since it involves no actions of *dramatis personae*, although a fairy tale cannot be without it. The first seven functions forming the "preparatory section" of a tale is listed by Propp (1968: 26-30) in sequential order as follows:

# I. ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY ABSENTS HIMSELF FROM HOME. (Definition: *absentation*. Designation: β)

1. *The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation (β<sup>1</sup>). Usual forms of absentation: to go to work, to the forest, to the trade, to war, on business, etc.*
2. *An intensified form of absentation is represented by the death of parents. (β<sup>2</sup>)*
3. *Sometimes members of the younger generation absent themselves: Usual forms of absentation: to go visiting, fishing, for a walk, out to gather berries, etc. (β<sup>3</sup>)*

II. AN INTERDICTION IS ADDRESSED TO THE HERO. (Definition: *interdiction*. Designation:  $\gamma$ )

1. *Interdiction* ( $\gamma^1$ ). Sometimes, on the contrary, an interdiction is evidenced in a weakened form as a request or bit of advice. The tale generally mentions an absention at first, and then an interdiction. The sequence of events, of course, actually runs in reverse. Interdiction can also be made without being connected with an absention.
2. *An inverted form of interdiction is represented by an order or a suggestion.* ( $\gamma^2$ )

III. THE INTERDICTION IS VIOLATED (Definition: *violation*. Designation:  $\delta$ )

1. *An interdiction is violated.* ( $\delta^1$ ).
2. *An order or command is carried out* ( $\delta^2$ ).

IV. THE VILLAIN MAKES AN ATTEMPT AT RECONNAISSANCE.  
(Definition: *reconnaissance*. Designation:  $\varepsilon$ )

1. *The reconnaissance has the aim of finding out the location of children, or sometimes of precious objects, etc.* ( $\varepsilon^1$ )
2. *An inverted form of reconnaissance is evidenced when the intended victim questions the villain.* ( $\varepsilon^2$ )
3. *In separate instances one encounters forms of reconnaissance by means of other personages.* ( $\varepsilon^3$ )

V. THE VILLAIN RECEIVES INFORMATION ABOUT HIS VICTIM.  
(Definition: *delivery*. Designation:  $\zeta$ )

1. *The villain directly receives an answer to his question.* ( $\zeta^1$ )
- 2-3. *An inverted or other form of information-gathering evokes a corresponding answer.*<sup>8</sup>

VI. THE VILLAIN ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE HIS VICTIM IN ORDER TO  
TAKE POSSESSION OF HIM OR OF HIS BELONGINGS. (Definition: *trickery*. Designation:  $\eta$ )

1. *The villain uses persuasion* ( $\eta^1$ ).
2. *The villain proceeds to act by the direct application of magical means* ( $\eta^2$ ).
3. *The villain employs other means of deception or coercion* ( $\eta^3$ ).

VII. THE VICTIM SUBMITS TO DECEPTION AND THEREBY  
UNWITTINGLY HELPS HIS ENEMY. (Definition: *complicity*. Designation:  $\theta$ )

1. *The hero agrees to all of the villain's persuasions* ( $\theta^1$ ).
2. *The hero mechanically reacts to the employment of magical or other means* ( $\theta^2$ ).

3. *The hero gives in or reacts mechanically to the deceit of the villain ( $\theta^3$ ).*

Of these seven functions, *interdiction* ( $\gamma$ ) and *violation* ( $\delta$ ) are paired, with the forms of violation corresponding to the forms of interdiction. At this moment, the villain, whose role is to commit various forms of villainy and to cause various forms of misfortune, makes his/her first presence in the tale. Functions  $\varepsilon$  and  $\zeta$  are paired to each other, so are functions  $\eta$  and  $\theta$ . It is worth noting that paired functions do not always necessarily co-occur with each other in a tale, and in this case, the first half of the pair is usually implied by the author or just felt by the reader.

The second sequential section, which is composed of functions numbered 8 to 11, comprises the complication of the tale, where the villain and the hero are brought from the background to the centre of the stage. In this section, the function *villainy* which is designated as A is a necessary element to a fairy tale because it triggers off crises, builds up conflicts, and thereby sets the tale in motion. The importance of this function to a fairy tale is that of a locomotive to a train, and without it a tale could not go forward. Propp (1968: 30-34) lists 19 forms of function A, and presents them one by one as follows:

#### VIII. THE VILLAIN CAUSES HARM OR INJURY TO A MEMBER OF A FAMILY. (Definition: *villainy*. Designation: A.)

1. *The villain abducts a person ( $A^1$ ).*
2. *The villain seizes or takes away a magical agent ( $A^2$ ).*
- 2a. *The forcible seizure of a magical helper creates a special subclass of this form ( $A^{ii}$ ).*
3. *The villain pillages or spoils the crops ( $A^3$ ).*
4. *The villain seizes the daylight ( $A^4$ ).*
5. *The villain plunders in other forms ( $A^5$ ).*
6. *The villain causes bodily injury ( $A^6$ ).*
7. *The villain causes a sudden disappearance ( $A^7$ ).*
- 7a. *The villain causes a prince to completely forget his bride. In this case, the victim is the bride, who loses her betrothed ( $A^{vii}$ ).*
8. *The villain demands or entices his victim ( $A^8$ ).*
9. *The villain expels someone ( $A^9$ ).*

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<sup>8</sup> This situation occurs in the form of either the hero receiving information by other means ( $\zeta^2$ ) or information being received by other means ( $\zeta^3$ ), as exemplified in Propp (1968: 149).



10. *The villain orders someone to be thrown into the sea* (A<sup>10</sup>).
11. *The villain casts a spell upon someone or something* (A<sup>11</sup>).
12. *The villain effects a substitution* (A<sup>12</sup>).
13. *The villain orders a murder to be committed* (A<sup>13</sup>).
14. *The villain commits murder* (A<sup>14</sup>).
15. *The villain imprisons or detains someone* (A<sup>15</sup>).
16. *The villain threatens forced matrimony* (A<sup>16</sup>).
- 16a. *The same form among relatives* (A<sup>xvi</sup>).
17. *The villain makes a threat of cannibalism* (A<sup>17</sup>).
- 17a. *The same form among relatives* (A<sup>xvii</sup>).
18. *The villain torments at night* (A<sup>18</sup>).
19. *The villain declares war* (A<sup>19</sup>).

In the one hundred Russian fairy tales selected for morphological analysis, Propp (1968: 34) finds that quite a considerable number of them start with a certain situation of *lack* or *insufficiency*,<sup>9</sup> rather than with the affliction of misfortune caused by the villain. This situation gives rise to quests analogous to those in the case of villainy. It is for this reason that Propp treats *lack* as the morphological equivalent for *villainy*. Propp (1968: 35) finds two possible ways of presenting the situation of lack in the Russian fairy tales: one is given as a result of a certain act which creates an insufficiency and provokes a quest, and the other as a ready-made one, which also provokes a quest. In the former case, the situation of lack is created from without, while in the latter case, it is conceived from within.

#### VIIIa. ONE MEMBER OF A FAMILY EITHER LACKS SOMETHING OR DESIRES TO HAVE SOMETHING. (Definition: *lack*. Designation: *a*).

1. *Lack of a bride (or a friend, or a human being generally)* (a<sup>1</sup>).
2. *A magical agent is needed* (a<sup>2</sup>).
3. *Wondrous objects without magical power* (a<sup>3</sup>).
4. *A specific form: the magic egg is lacking* (a<sup>4</sup>).
5. *Rational forms: money, the means of existence, etc. are lacking* (a<sup>5</sup>).
6. *Lacking in various other forms* (a<sup>6</sup>).

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<sup>9</sup> Propp (1968: 35) admits that no better words than *nedostáča* (lack) and *nexvátka* (insufficiency) can be found in the Russian language for the given concept, although neither of them is wholly satisfactory.

Generally speaking a fairy tale cannot be without function A or *a*, and there is no exception to this rule in the one hundred Russian fairy tales, although not all of them begin with a villainous act or a certain situation of lack or insufficiency. In the case of a tale which starts otherwise, functions peculiar to the *middle* of the tale will be *transferred to the beginning*, as observed in Propp (1968: 36). Next to the function *villainy* and *lack* is a connective incident, a function with B given as its sign, which brings the hero into the tale by making the villainy or lack known to the hero.

IX. MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS MADE KNOWN. THE HERO IS APPROACHED WITH A REQUEST OR COMMAND; HE IS ALLOWED TO GO OR HE IS DISPATCHED. (Definition: *mediation, the connective incident*. Designation: B)

1. *A call for help is given, with the resultant dispatch of the hero* (B<sup>1</sup>).
2. *The hero is dispatched directly* (B<sup>2</sup>).
3. *The hero is allowed to depart from home* (B<sup>3</sup>).
4. *Misfortune is announced* (B<sup>4</sup>).
5. *The banished hero is transported away from home* (B<sup>5</sup>).
6. *The hero condemned to death is secretly freed* (B<sup>6</sup>).
7. *A lament is sung* (B<sup>7</sup>).

Here heroes are functionally divided into two types: victimised hero and seeker-hero. Of the seven subclasses of function B, the first four belong to seeker-heroes, and the following three to victim-heroes. A victimised hero refers to one who first falls victim of a villainous act and then takes actions to prevent himself from being destroyed by the villain, while a seeker-hero is one who, after learning of a villainous act, decides to take counteractions (C), and then performs a function of going off in search of a person or an object that is the victim of a villainous act, a function designated as ↑.

X. THE SEEKER AGREES TO OR DECIDES UPON COUNTERACTION. (Definition: *beginning counteraction*. Designation: C)

XI. THE HERO LEAVES HOME. (Definition: *departure*. Designation: ↑).

Functions numbered 12-15 constitute the third sequential section of a tale, where new characters termed "donor" and/or "helper" makes his/her first appearance, the hero obtains a magical agent and/or a helper after he is put to test, and is transferred, delivered or led to whereabouts of a person or object of search. This section starts with the function D, the first function of a donor.

XII. THE HERO IS TESTED, INTERROGATED, ATTACKED, ETC., WHICH PREPARES THE WAY FOR HIS RECEIVING EITHER A MAGICAL AGENT OR HELPER. (Definition: *the first function of the donor.* Designation: D.)

1. *The donor tests the hero (D<sup>1</sup>).*
2. *The donor greets and interrogates the hero (D<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *A dying or deceased person requests the rendering of a service (D<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *A prisoner begs for his freedom (D<sup>4</sup>).*
- 4\* *The same as the preceding, accompanied by the preliminary imprisonment of the donor (\*D<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *The hero is approached with a request for mercy (D<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *Disputants request a division of property (D<sup>6</sup>).*
7. *Other requests (D<sup>7</sup>).*
8. *A hostile creature attempts to destroy the hero (D<sup>8</sup>).*
9. *A hostile creature engages the hero in combat (D<sup>9</sup>).*
10. *The hero is shown a magical agent which is offered for exchange (D<sup>10</sup>).*

XIII. THE HERO REACTS TO THE ACTIONS OF THE FUTURE DONOR. (Definition: *the hero's reaction.* Designation: E) In the majority of instances, the reaction is either positive or negative.

1. *The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test (E<sup>1</sup>).*
2. *The hero answers (or does not answer) a greeting (E<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *He renders (or does not render) a service to a dead person (E<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *He frees a captive (E<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *He shows mercy to a suppliant (E<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *He completes an apportionment and reconciles the disputants (E<sup>6</sup>).* The request of disputants (or simply an argument without a request) more often evokes a different reaction. The hero deceives the disputants, making them run, for example; meanwhile, he himself seizes the disputed objects (E<sup>vi</sup>).
7. *The hero performs some other service (E<sup>7</sup>).*

8. *The hero saves himself from an attempt on his life by employing the same tactics used by his adversary (E<sup>8</sup>).*
9. *The hero vanquishes (or does not vanquish) his adversary (E<sup>9</sup>).*
10. *The hero agrees to an exchange, but immediately employs the magic power of the object exchanged against the barterer (E<sup>10</sup>).*

XIV. THE HERO ACQUIRES THE USE OF A MAGICAL AGENT. (Definition: *provision or receipt of a magical agent*. Designation: F.)

1. *The agent is directly transferred (F<sup>1</sup>).* Something of a certain material value rather than a magical agent is transferred (f<sup>1</sup>). If the hero's reaction is negative, then the transference may not occur (F neg.), or is replaced by cruel retribution (F contr.).
2. *The agent is pointed out (F<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *The agent is prepared (F<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *The agent is sold and purchased (F<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *The agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance (is found by him) (F<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *The agent suddenly appears of its own accord (F<sup>6</sup>).* The agent appears from out of the earth.
7. *The agent is eaten or drunk (F<sup>7</sup>).*
8. *The agent is seized (F<sup>8</sup>).*
9. *Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero (F<sup>9</sup>).* A magical agent /creature indicates it will appear of its own accord in some time of need (f<sup>9</sup>) or appears of its own accord to offer service and is accepted as a helper (F<sub>9</sub><sup>6</sup>).

According to Propp (1968: 43-44), "magical agents" can be animals, objects out of which magical helpers appear, objects possessing a magical property, and qualities or capacities which are directly given, such as the power of transformation into animals. He (1968: 82) later adds while discussing tale roles of characters that when objects or qualities act in the same way as do living things, they function as a living thing, and therefore must be treated as equivalent qualities, although it is more convenient to term living things as "magical helpers" and objects and qualities as "magical agents".

Following is the fourth sequential section of a tale, in which the hero is brought into direct conflict with the villain. This section starts with function 15 designated as G, a function involving the transference of the hero from one place to another place.

XV. THE HERO IS TRANSFERRED, DELIVERED, OR LED TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF AN OBJECT OF SEARCH. (Definition: *spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance*. Designation: G.)

1. *The hero flies through the air* (G<sup>1</sup>).
2. *He travels on the ground or on water* (G<sup>2</sup>).
3. *He is led* (G<sup>3</sup>).
4. *The route is shown to him* (G<sup>4</sup>).
5. *He makes use of stationary means of communication* (G<sup>5</sup>).
6. *He follows bloody tracks* (G<sup>6</sup>).

Propp (1968: 51) notes that function G will be absent from a tale when the hero simply walks to his destination. In such a case, function G is counted as "a natural continuation of the function ↑", and therefore is not marked individually.

XVI. THE HERO AND THE VILLAIN JOIN IN DIRECT COMBAT. (Definition: *struggle*. Designation: H.)

1. *They fight in an open field* (H<sup>1</sup>).
2. *They engage in a competition* (H<sup>2</sup>).
3. *They play cards* (H<sup>3</sup>).
4. *They match with each other in weighing* (H<sup>4</sup>).

XVII. THE HERO IS BRANDED. (Definition: *branding, marking*. Designation: J.)

1. *A brand is applied to the body* (J<sup>1</sup>).
2. *The hero receives a ring or a towel* (J<sup>2</sup>).

XVIII. THE VILLAIN IS DEFEATED. (Definition: *victory*. Designation: I.)

1. *The villain is beaten in open combat* (I<sup>1</sup>).
- 1a. *One of the heroes hides, while the other is victorious* (\*I<sup>1</sup>).
2. *He is defeated in a contest* (I<sup>2</sup>).
3. *He loses at cards* (I<sup>3</sup>).
4. *He loses on being weighed* (I<sup>4</sup>).
5. *He is killed without a preliminary fight* (I<sup>5</sup>).
6. *He is banished directly* (I<sup>6</sup>).
7. *Victory is encountered in a negative form* (I<sub>neg.</sub>).

A victory of the hero over the villain usually will result in the function K, which is defined as the *liquidation* of the misfortune caused by the villainy or of the lack

felt by the hero in the first place. This function is paired to the villainy (A), and with this function a fairy tale reaches its climax.

XIX. THE INITIAL MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS LIQUIDATED. (Definition: *liquidation*. Designation: K)

1. *The object of a search is seized by the use of force or cleverness (K<sup>1</sup>).*
- 1a. Sometimes the capture is accomplished by two personages, one of whom orders the other to perform the actual business of catching (K<sup>1</sup>).
2. *The object of search is obtained by several personages at once, through a rapid interchange of their actions (K<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *The object of search is obtained with the help of enticements (K<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *The object of a quest is obtained as the direct result of preceding actions (K<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *The object of search is obtained instantly through the use of a magical agent (K<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty (K<sup>6</sup>).*
7. *The object of search is caught (K<sup>7</sup>).*
8. *The spell on a person is broken (K<sup>8</sup>).*
9. *A slain person is revived (K<sup>9</sup>).*
10. *A captive is freed (K<sup>10</sup>).*
11. The receipt of an object of search is sometimes accomplished by means of the same forms as the receipt of a magical agent. Designation of these occurrences: KF<sup>1</sup>, direct transmission; KF<sup>2</sup>, indication; etc., as above.

XX. THE HERO RETURNS. (Definition: *return*. Designation: ↓)

A tale can end with the liquidation of the misfortune or insufficiency, but more often than not, the hero enters into a second round of struggle with a villain or a false hero on his way home or after arrival at home. Sometimes, the hero is pursued all the way by the villain and eventually rescued from pursuit, and some tales draw to a close at this point.

XXI. THE HERO IS PURSUED. (Definition: *pursuit, chase*. Designation: Pr.)

1. *The pursuer flies after the hero (Pr<sup>1</sup>).*
2. *He demands the guilty person (Pr<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *He pursues the hero, rapidly transforming himself into various animals, etc. (Pr<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *Pursuers turn into alluring objects and place themselves in the path of the hero (Pr<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *The pursuer tries to devour the hero (Pr<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *The pursuer attempts to kill the hero (Pr<sup>6</sup>).*



7. *He tries to gnaw through a tree in which the hero is taking refuge (Pr<sup>7</sup>).*

## XXII. RESCUE OF THE HERO FROM PURSUIT. (Definition: *rescue*.

Designation: Rs.)

1. *He is carried away through the air (Rs<sup>1</sup>).*
2. *The hero flees, placing obstacles in the path of his pursuer (Rs<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *The hero, while in flight, changes into objects which make him unrecognisable (Rs<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *The hero hides himself during his flight (Rs<sup>4</sup>).*
5. *The hero is hidden by blacksmiths (Rs<sup>5</sup>).*
6. *The hero saves himself while in flight by means of rapid transformations into animals, stones, etc. (Rs<sup>6</sup>).*
7. *He avoids the temptations of transformed she-dragons (Rs<sup>7</sup>).*
8. *He does not allow himself to be devoured (Rs<sup>8</sup>).*
9. *He is saved from an attempt on his life (Rs<sup>9</sup>).*
10. *He jumps to another tree (Rs<sup>10</sup>).*

In many instances, however, the hero, after liquidating the initial misfortune or escaping from pursuit, finds a new misfortune or a lack in store for him as a result of an initial villainy or situation of insufficiency repeated in the same forms as in the beginning or in other forms. This new villainous act or situation of insufficiency initiates a new series of functions (ABC<sup>↑</sup>), and sets the tale into a new move. From this point onwards, the story develops differently from the first move of the tale, as shown in the functions numbered 23-31:

## XXIII. THE HERO, UNRECOGNIZED, ARRIVES HOME OR IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. (Definition: *unrecognised arrival*. Designation: o.)

## XXIV. A FALSE HERO PRESENTS UNFOUNDED CLAIMS. (Definition: *unfounded claims*. Designation: L.)

## XXV. A DIFFICULT TASK IS PROPOSED TO THE HERO. (Definition: *difficult task*. Designation: M.)

1. *Ordeal by food and drink;*
2. *Ordeal by fire;*
3. *Riddle guessing and similar ordeals;*
4. *Ordeal of choice;*
5. *Hide and seek;*
6. *To kiss the princess in a window;*

7. *To jump up on top of the gates;*
8. *Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude;*
9. *Test of endurance;*
10. *Task of supply;*
11. *Task of manufacture;*
12. *Other tasks.*

XXVI. THE TASK IS RESOLVED. (Definition: *solution*. Designation: N.)

Preliminary solutions of this type shall be designated by the sign \*N.

XXVII. THE HERO IS RECOGNIZED. (Definition: *recognition*. Designation: Q.)

XVIII. THE FALSE HERO OR VILLAIN IS EXPOSED (Definition: *exposure*. Designation: Ex.)

XXIX. THE HERO IS GIVEN A NEW APPEARANCE. (Definition: *transfiguration*. Designation: T.)

1. *A new appearance is directly effected by means of the magical action of a helper (T<sup>1</sup>).*
2. *The hero builds a marvellous palace (T<sup>2</sup>).*
3. *The hero puts on new garments (T<sup>3</sup>).*
4. *Rationalised and humorous forms (T<sup>4</sup>).*

XXX. THE VILLAIN IS PUNISHED. (Definition: *punishment*. Designation: U.)

XXXI. THE HERO IS MARRIED AND ASCENDS THE THRONE. (Definition: *wedding*. Designation: W.)

1. *A bride and a kingdom are awarded at once, or the hero receives half the kingdom at first, and the whole kingdom upon the death of the parents (W<sup>\*\*</sup>).*
2. *Sometimes the hero simply marries without obtaining a throne, since his bride is not a princess (W<sup>\*</sup>).*
3. *Sometimes, on the contrary, only accession to the throne is mentioned (W<sup>•</sup>).*
4. *If a new act of villainy interrupts a tale shortly before a wedding, then the first move ends with a betrothal, or a promise of marriage (w<sup>1</sup>).*
5. *The marriage is resumed as the result of a quest (Designation for a resumed marriage: w<sup>2</sup>).*
6. *The hero sometimes receives a monetary reward or some other form of compensation in place of the princess's hand (w<sup>0</sup>).*

As regards function U, Propp (1968: 63) finds there exists with some tales a reverse form (U neg.), in which the villain is magnanimously pardoned, thus left unpunished at the end of a tale. In a tale of two moves, usually the villain of the

second move and the false hero are punished, while the villain of the first is punished only in tales devoid of functions of pursuit (Pr.) and rescue (Rs.). With function W, the whole tale revolves to an end.

It is worth pointing out that Propp (1968: 64) finds in the research data some cases, although very small in number, where actions of the hero do not comply with any of the 31 functions as displayed above, and he defines these as "unclear elements and designate them with the sign X."

- Propp's tale functions and tale roles

Propp's morphological study of the fairy tale is by nature the study of the tale according to the functions of its *dramatis personae*, so the identification of functions in a tale can never be carried out independently from the identification of tale roles. Like functions, tale roles, or *dramatis personae*, have no real existence outside of tale texts. A tale role does not refer to any specific character in a tale, and it is an abstract category generated from actual fairy tale characters.

The actual number and variety of characters in the fairy tales can be very large, but the number of tale roles is very limited and fixed. Propp (1968: 79-80) lists a total of seven tale roles, namely, *hero*, *villain*, *dispatcher*, *donor*, *helper*, *sought-for person* (princess and her father), and *false hero*, and presents them in the context of the sphere(s) of action they involve in a tale as follows:

1. The sphere of action of the *villain*: Constituents: villainy (A); a fight or other forms of struggle with the hero (H); pursuit (Pr.).
2. The sphere of action of the *donor* (provider). Constituents: the preparation for the transmission of a magical agent (D); provision of the hero with a magical agent (F).
3. The sphere of action of the *helper*. Constituents: the spatial transference of the hero (G); liquidation of misfortune or lack (K); rescue from pursuit (Rs.); the solution of difficult tasks (N); transfiguration of the hero (T).
4. The sphere of action of a *princess* (a sought-for person) and *her father*. Constituents: the assignment of difficult tasks (M); branding (J); exposure (Ex.); recognition (Q); punishment of a second villain (U); marriage (W).
5. The sphere of action of the *dispatcher*. Constituents: dispatch (connective incident, B)

6. The sphere of action of the *hero*. Constituents: departure on a search ( $C\uparrow$ ); reaction to the demand of the donor (E); wedding ( $W^*$ ). The first function (C) is characteristic of the seeker-hero; the victim-hero performs only the remaining functions.
7. The sphere of action of the *false hero* also includes  $C\uparrow$ , followed by E and , as a specific function, L.

As is the case with the 31 tale functions, a tale does not necessarily contain all the seven tale roles, but none of the one hundred Russian fairy tales has been found to have more than seven. It is quite possible for a tale to have a larger number of characters than tale roles, and *vice versa*. The former situation arises as a result of more than one character being involved in one and the same sphere(s) of action, and the latter as a result of one character moving through more than one sphere of action in the tale. Propp (1968: 80-81) gives three possibilities as to how the above-mentioned spheres of actions are distributed among individual characters in a tale:

1. The sphere of action exactly corresponds to the character.
2. One character is involved in several spheres of action.
3. A single sphere of action is distributed among several characters.

- Propp's morphological scheme of the fairy tale

An important goal of Propp's morphological analysis is to work out "the compositional scheme" Propp (1984: 74) believes to be "underlying wondertales". So the recognition and extraction of some 31 functions from the corpus is only the first step, although a significant one, towards a synchronic description of a morphological system underlying the Russian fairy tales.

After breaking down the text of a tale into its basic component parts, Propp is confronted with the task of reconstructing the abstract functional signs into a morphologically significant scheme to represent the grammatical system as linguists do with syntactical analysis of sentences. Propp (1968: 65) treats the morphological scheme as a "yardstick" to measure and define a tale. By this yardstick, Propp (1968: 92) defines a tale (*skázka*) as "any development proceeding from villainy (A) or a lack (*a*), through intermediary functions to marriage ( $W^*$ ), or to other functions

employed as a *dénouement*," such as transference of a magical agent (F), liquidation of misfortune or lack (K), or rescue from pursuit (Rs.).

To describe this procedure, Propp (1968: 92) devises a new unit termed *move* (*xod*) to refer to the course of actions developing from the function *villainy* and/or *lack* to any one of the terminal functions. In tales of more than one move, special devices such as parallelism, repetition, insertion, etc. are employed to join different moves together to form a coherent narrative text. In accordance with the devices used in a multi-move tale, Propp (1968: 93-94) sums up six major modes of move combination in the Russian fairytales as follows:

1. One move directly follows another. An approximate scheme of such combination is:

I. A W\*  
II. A w<sup>2</sup>

2. A new move begins before the termination of the first one. Action is interrupted by an episodic move. After the completion of the episode, the completion of the first move follows as well. The scheme is :

I. A G-----K W\*  
II. a K

3. An episode may also be interrupted in its turn, and in this case fairly complicated schemes may result:

I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_  
III. \_\_\_\_\_

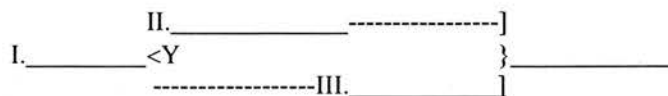
4. A tale may begin with two villainies at once, of which the first one may be liquidated completely before the other is. If the hero is killed and a magical agent is stolen from him, then first of all the murder is liquidated, and then the theft is liquidated also.

$A_2^{14} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{I. } \underline{\hspace{2cm}} K^9 \\ \text{II. } \underline{\hspace{2cm}} K^1 \end{array} \right.$

5. Two moves may have a common ending.

I. \_\_\_\_\_  
II. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Sometimes a tale contains *two* seekers. The heroes part in the middle of the first move. They usually part with omens at a road marker. This road marker serves as a *disuniting* element designated by the sign <. On parting, the heroes often give one another an object: a signaller designated by Y. The schemes of such folktales are :



Since a single move can form a tale, and a tale can contain more than one move, the question arises as to whether each move in a multi-move text constitutes a separate tale or whether two or more moves in a text are combined into a single tale. In the case where there is only one move in a text, the number of tales in the text can only be one. As for a multi-move text, things are different. Propp (1968: 94-95) lists seven instances belonging to a single-tale text as follows:

1. If the tale consists of two moves, one of which ends positively and the other negatively;
2. If the tale contains trebling of entire moves;
3. If a magical agent is obtained in the first move and is used only in the second;
4. If a new quest is provoked by a suddenly sensed shortage or lack prior to the liquidation of the initial misfortune or lack;
5. If two villainous acts are present together in the complication;
6. If the hero fights with a villain in the first move and solves a difficult task in the second move;
7. If two heroes part at a road marker, and follow different paths, but their fate remains linked to each other.

Propp (1968: 101) believes that structural features can be employed for tale classification and the presence or absence of certain functions for a further classification of a single tale into subtypes. He (1968: 102) identifies four sub-classes in the tale type known as fairy tales on the basis of the presence or absence of two sets of functions, that is, H-I (struggle-victory) and M-N (difficult task-its solution): (1) development through H-I, development through M-N, development through both H-I and M-N, and development without either, which Propp (1968: 104-105) presents in the form of morphological scheme as follows:



1. With H-I: ABC↑DEFG HJK↓Pr Rs° LQEx TUW\*.
2. With M-N: ABC↑DEFG° LMJNK↓Pr Rs Q Ex TUW\*.
3. With both: ABC↑F H-IK↓LM-N Q Ex UW\*.
4. With neither: ABC↑DEFGK↓Pr Rs Q Ex TUW\*.

Propp (1968: 102) claims that the relation between the two sets of functions is that of mutual exclusion because the two pairs of functions rarely co-occur in one move. In the case where both H-I and M-N occur in one tale, the move with H-I most probably comes prior to the move with M-N. Propp (1968: 103) believes that each of the two moves is capable of existing separately, but a combination of them will produce a morphologically fully-fledged fairy tale, as shown in Propp (1968: 105):

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{HJK}\downarrow\text{Pr Rs}^\circ\text{L} \\ \text{ABC}\uparrow\text{DEFG} \text{-----} \text{Q Ex T U W} \\ \text{LMJNK}\downarrow\text{Pr Rs} \end{array}$$

As focus is fixed in *Morphology* on identification and definition of tale functions, Propp does not list all the functional schemes of the Russian fairy tales investigated, nor does he make a thorough investigation of the few functional schemes presented for morphological analysis. Propp seems to have realised that he has failed to give enough attention to concrete analyses of tale texts, so he (1968: 128-134) adds a section to *Morphology* as Appendix II devoted to "techniques of analysis" to make up for the insufficiencies in his morphological system. Propp (1968: 129-130) selects a double-move tale from his data and presents its functional scheme in this section as follows:

$$\beta^1 \gamma^2 \zeta^4 \eta^3 \delta^2 \theta^3 A^1 \left\{ \frac{C \uparrow [D^1 E^1 \text{ neg.}]^3 [D^1 E^1 \text{ neg.}]^3 F \text{ contr}}{B^4 C \uparrow [D^1 E^1 \text{ pos.}]^3 [D^1 E^1 \text{ pos.}]^3} \right\} H^1 - I^1 K^4 \downarrow$$

Propp separates the two moves using a cross axle, the sequence of functions above which seems to belong to the first move and that below which the second one. With functions A<sup>1</sup> and K<sup>4</sup> excluded from the braces, however, no one can tell for certain which move they belong to. What is worse, with function A occurring only once in this Russian fairy tale, Propp's treatment of this as a double-move tale obviously

contradicts with his own idea (1968: 92) that "Each new act of villainy, each new lack creates a new move".

The problem with the functional scheme, as we understand, arises more from Propp's incomplete observation of morphological structures and inaccurate definition of moves than from his way of presenting them. In his definition of "move", Propp takes no account of the preparatory functions designated as  $\beta\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta\eta\theta$ , nor does he sufficiently clarify the relationship of moves to tales. This leads to confusion as to whether function A or function groups  $\beta^1\gamma^2\zeta^1\eta^3\delta^2\theta^3$  and  $H^1-I^1K^4\downarrow$  are part of either of the two moves, or if so, which move they respectively belong to in this double-move Russian fairy tale.

The confusion arising from the above functional scheme of the double-move Russian fairy tale convinces us of the necessity of redefining the concept of "move". Based on our observation of classical Chinese tales of magic, we propose that moves should be first and foremost understood as a structural unit, which is larger than functions and smaller than tales, and contains one or more of the nuclear paired functions, such as  $\delta$ -U, A-U, a-K/W, and E-F/K in the case of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction. A single move can stand by itself as a self-sufficient entity, but is also capable of being combined with one or more moves to form a coherent larger whole. This definition covers two most important aspects of a move, that is, structure and function, and is therefore more scientific and operable when applied to analysis of concrete data.

- Vladimir Propp in China

In the 1960s and 1970s when Proppian method and model was widely applied to the study of folktales and narrative texts of other genres in the West, Vladimir Propp was little known in Chinese academic circles. After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), there arose a great revival of interest among Chinese intellectuals in Western culture. Much as was the case with the May Fourth Movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, publications on Western philosophy and social sciences filled the shelves of bookstores across the country. In the 1980s there appeared no less than 30 books introducing and translating Western structuralist theories. Influential among them

were J. Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*, T. Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, G. Genette's *Discours du Récit*, A. Greimas' *Sémantique Structurale*, T. Hawkes' *Structuralism and Semiotics*, etc. With these works, Propp's name and his morphological theory came to be known for the first time to Chinese students of literature.

To my knowledge, Yuan Kejia 袁可嘉 was the first Chinese scholar to introduce Propp to China. In an article entitled "Jiegou Zhuyi Wenxue Lilun Pingshu" 結構主義文學理論評述 (A Review of Structuralist Literary Theory), he presented *Morphology* in the context of Russian formalism and compared Propp with the French school of structuralist mythology represented by Lévi-Strauss. Although he recognised some unique features about Propp's *Morphology*, he (1979: 143) did not conceal his doubt about the effectiveness and applicability of Proppian theory and method in studying a specific work of literature, claiming: "This [morphological] method is a formalist one, which tends to be divorced from the ideological significance and artistic features of a specific work. It might be able to provide some useful ideas about structures and forms, but it cannot be of much help for us to understand a concrete work."

The Chinese word for "formalism" is "xingshi zhuyi" 形式主義, a term carrying a strong derogatory sense which is lacking in its English equivalent. In the orthodox Chinese communist vocabulary, the word "formalism" is always associated with such so-called anti-/non-Marxist world outlook and methodology as "dogmatism" (*jiaotiao zhuyi* 教條主義), "idealism" (*weixin zhuyi* 唯心主義), and "metaphysics" (*xing'er shangxue* 形而上學). In artistic and literary discourse, formalism has been defined as "an anti-realist artistic trend of thought appearing towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characteristic of detachment from realistic life, denial of the ideological content of artistic works, and pursuit of only the novel and eccentric to attract attention."<sup>10</sup> In the light of this long-standing negative view of "formalism" in China, it is not difficult to understand Yuan's negative comments on Propp and his morphological approach to literature. In line

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<sup>10</sup> For this definition, see *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* 現代漢語詞典 (A Dictionary of Modern Chinese Language), (revised ed.), p. 1410. Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1998.

with this ideological prejudice against "formalism" was the contrasting treatment of formalism and structuralism in China: while structuralism was exalted to heaven, formalism was consigned to the limbo of oblivion.

During most of the 1980s, there was not much interest in Russian formalism, and Propp remained rather an unknown figure in China. He might well have been buried in obscurity but for the efforts of a few mythologists and folklorists. Most representative of them were Ye Shuxian 葉舒憲 and Liu Shouhua 劉守華, to whom Chinese students of morphology are indebted for their insightful and inspiring review of Propp and his morphological theory. Ye Shuxian (1988) translated parts of *Morphology*, included them in *Jiegou Zhuyi Shenhuaxue* 結構主義神話學 (Structuralist Mythology), placing it alongside the French structuralist school of mythology, and made a fair and positive comment on Propp's unique contribution to literary criticism and folklore studies. Liu Shouhua (1988), a leading Chinese scholar of folktales, introduced Propp in his *Gushixue Gangyao* 故事學綱要 (An Outline of Taleology), and called for more efforts to be made to study and apply the Proppian morphological approach to Chinese folktales.

Since 1979 when Propp was first introduced to China, more than two decades have passed, but an unabridged Chinese version of *Morphology* has not yet been published. Over these years Propp has exerted world-wide influence on research in the fields of folklore and literary criticism, but his influence in China has been quite modest. Those efforts which have recently been made to carry out Proppian structural analyses of narrative texts have often been done by literary researchers rather than by folklorists and mythologists. Literary researchers who have experimented with this kind of analysis have usually done so on a very limited basis. Typically, they have drawn upon Propp's work for an analysis of one or two folktale texts to demonstrate to students of literature how the Proppian system works with folktales, as shown in Luo Gang 羅鋼 (1994: 53-73). There has been no attempt to date to use Propp's work in a systematic or extensive way to study Chinese narrative texts, let alone apply it to the analysis of *zhiguai* fiction, which has been identified by Leo Tak-hung Chan (1998: 247) as the genre which, "would yield itself most readily to the kind of formal analyses first utilised by Vladimir Propp to explore the folktale."



## Chapter Seven: A Morphological Analysis of Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction

### Section 1. Notes on the morphological analysis of *zhiguai* tale texts

- Procedures of morphological analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the construction of *zhiguai* tales through the application of Propp's structural model. For each of the 50 tale texts, the particular form<sup>1</sup> and sequence of functions will be determined, and a functional scheme presented immediately after a morphological analysis of the text, with a list of *dramatis personae* provided. Based on the functional scheme of the text analysed, moves are to be enumerated, the relationship between them elucidated, and a further classification of the tale text conducted. All these will be carried out in accordance with Propp (1968) as discussed in the previous chapter, except for the tale text classification, owing to some distinctive features of Chinese tales of the strange and supernatural which are lacking in the Russian fairy tales.

Propp (1968: 101-102) builds his quadripartite classification of Russian fairy tales on the basis of the presence and absence of the two sets of pair functions H-I and M-N,<sup>2</sup> but in the Chinese data, both of them, especially the pair functions M-N, display an extremely low frequency of occurrence, which makes a Proppian style of classification of Chinese tales of magic insignificant in theory and impossible in practice. However, when we compare classical Chinese *zhiguai* tales with North American Indian folktales analysed by Alan Dundes (1964), we find a striking resemblance existing between them in the rare occurrence of H-I and M-N, and the ubiquitous appearance of twin functions *Lack-Lack Liquidated*. It is these common features which constitute the reason for combining Propp's and Dundes' schemes to

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<sup>1</sup> While enumerating functions of the *dramatis personae*, Propp presents all the forms of each of the 31 functions found in the one hundred Russian fairy tales, as shown in Appendix III. However, in Chinese tales of the supernatural and strange, we have found functions taking forms different or absent from Propp's data. For a list of forms of functions found peculiar to Chinese *zhiguai* fiction, see Appendix IV.

<sup>2</sup> According to Propp (1968: 101), function pair H-I occurs forty-one times in the one hundred Russian fairy tales, M-N thirty-three times, and the two paired functions co-occur in one tale text only three times, which together account for almost 80% of Propp's corpus.



remedy the inadequacy shown in Propp's model when applied to the classification of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction.

Alan Dundes owes much to Vladimir Propp in building up his motifeme-focused sequential patterns of North American Indian folktales. As compared with Vladimir Propp's, Dundes' model, however, shows an even stronger linguistic tendency. To Alan Dundes, structural analysis is not an end but a means to discover the structural patterns of folktales in terms of sequence of motifemes. Motifeme, or "emic motif", is a linguist concept developed by the eminent American linguist and anthropologist Kenneth. L. Pike (1954: 75) to refer to the minimum unit of the feature mode, which is combined with the manifestation mode and the distribution mode to form an emic unit in his *tacmemic* system. Propp's function, as an emic unit, includes all the three modes, "but the overall generalised meaning of the function would correspond to the feature mode."<sup>3</sup>

Based on the three modes of each motifeme identified in the data, Dundes (1964:61) generates "four widespread" patterns of North American Indian folktales: one two-motifeme sequence, "Lack & Lack-Liquidated"; two four-motifeme sequences, "Interdiction, Violation, Consequence, and Attempted Escape" and "Lack, Deceit, Deception, and Lack-Liquidated"; one six motifeme sequence, "Lack, Lack-Liquidated, Interdiction, Violation, Consequence, and Attempted Escape". He believes (1964: 85) that his four motifeme sequences abstracted from the individual Indian folktales also pertain to longer, more complex tales, since the extensive and lengthy tales are usually made up of separate distinct tales.<sup>4</sup>

A morphological analysis of the fifty Chinese tales of magic has revealed some definite recurrent sequences of functions termed by Dundes (1964: 61) "nuclear motifeme sequence". These sequences constitute a limited number of distinct patterns underlying the majority of the data, which are the structural basis for the classification of *zhiguai* fiction. The most recurrent nuclear function pairs are *Lack/Lack-Liquidated* (hereafter L/L), *Villainy/Punishment* (hereafter V/P), *Interdiction-Violation of the Interdiction/Punishment* (hereafter I-V/P), and *Test-*

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed account of the corresponding relationship between Propp's function and Pike's three modes of an emic unit, see Alan Dundes (1964: 58).

<sup>4</sup> For his analysis of more complex and extended Northern American Indian tales, see Chapter V of Dundes (1964).

*Response/Reward (Retribution)* (hereafter T-R/R), and accordingly, Chinese tales of the supernatural and strange are to be categorised at the move level into four major classes: the class of L/L, the class of V/P, the class V-I/P, and the class of T-R/R.<sup>5</sup>

- Signs used for morphological analysis

1. Each function identified in a tale text is immediately followed by a Proppian sign, as defined in the previous chapter.
2. No signs are assigned to plot elements which have no functions to perform.
3. A plus sign “+” is used to represent a double morphological meaning of a function.
4. A minus sign “-” is used to represent a negative result of a function.
5. Roman numerals are used to number sequences of functions in a tale text.
6. A dotted line within two bar lines “|-----|” is used where a sequence of functions is interrupted by function(s) belonging to a different sequence.
7. A single bar line “|” is used where an embedded sequence of functions is interrupted or comes to an end.

## Section 2. Morphological analysis of fifty *zhiguai* tale texts<sup>6</sup>

### Tale 1. Kua Fu Pursues the Sun

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Kua Fu starts off in pursuit of the sun ( $a^6\uparrow$ ). He chases the shadow of the sun all the way to Yu Deep ( $G^3$ ) and catches up with it there ( $K^4$ ).

He takes a drink from the Yellow River, but still feels thirsty ( $a^6$ ), so he heads for the Great Lake ( $\uparrow$ ), but dies on the way ( $K-$ ).

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<sup>5</sup> The reason for classifying a tale text at the move level rather than at the tale text level is that classification at the tale text level would not yield more information about their functional patterns than at the move level because most of the research data derive from multi-move tale texts.

<sup>6</sup> All the fifty tales have been introduced and discussed in terms of their authorship, dating, original source, and text information in Part One of this thesis. For an English version of the complete text of each of these tales, see Appendix II.

This is a double-move tale of the class L/L. Kua Fu, the only character involved in this story, is the hero, who achieves his goal in the first move but dies a tragic death before fulfilling his wish in the second one.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^6 \uparrow G^3 K^4$

II.  $a^6 \uparrow K-$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Kua Fu: Hero

Tale 2. Gun Steals the Expanding Soil

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

There is a great flood ( $a^6$ : lack of control over the floodwater). In order to cover the flooded area with soil, Gun steals some of the expanding soil from the Heavenly Emperor ( $\uparrow F^{10}$ ). In a rage, the emperor kills Gun ( $a^6$ : lack/loss of life). Out of Gun's body, however, was born Yu ( $K_9$ ), who obtains approval from the Heavenly Emperor to sow the magic earth ( $F^9$ ) and brings an end to the flood ( $K^{11}$ ).

This is a double move tale of the class of L/L. Gun is the hero who risks his life to steal the magic earth in order to save the world from being flooded. His life is continued in the birth of Yu, who fulfils Gun's wish by stopping the flood. The Heavenly Emperor functions as a donor (of the magical soil), albeit a reluctant one.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^6 \uparrow F^{10} \mid \text{-----} \mid F^9 K^{11}$

II.  $a^6 K_9 \mid$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Gun: Hero

Yu: Hero

The Heavenly Emperor: Donor

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

The sky collapses, precipitating the whole world into chaos ( $a^6$ , lack of order). Nüwa, a goddess with supernatural power comes to man's rescue ( $\uparrow$ ). She mends the sky and restores law and order in the world ( $K^v$ ), and then returns to Heaven in glory ( $\downarrow$ ). This is a single-move tale of the class L/L. Nüwa is the only character who plays the role of heroine in the story.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^6\uparrow K^v\downarrow$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Nüwa: Heroine

Tale 4: The Old Fool Who Tried to Remove Mountains

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

The Old Fool lives behind two mountains, which block his way to the south ( $a^6$ : lack of a way out). He intends to level the two mountains and declares his decision at a family meeting ( $B^1$ ). All present agree with him (C) except his wife who questions the feasibility of his plan ( $D^1$ ). The Old Fool gives his reasons in retort ( $E^1$ ). He starts off for the mountains with his family, followed by a seven-year-old son of Jiingcheng, a widow who lives next door ( $\uparrow$ ). The Wise Old Man tries to dissuade him ( $D^1$ ), but fails to change his mind ( $E^1$ ). Moved by his strong will, the Heavenly Emperor orders Kua'ershi's two sons to carry away the two mountains ( $KF^9$ ).

This is a single-move tale of the class L/L. The Old Fool is the hero who implements his plan regardless of the opposition of his wife and the jeers of the Wise Old Man, and finally succeeds in fulfilling his wish with the help of two gods. The Old Fool's wife, the Wise Old Man and the Heavenly Emperor jointly play the role of donor in that the former two characters put the hero to the test (D) by opposing to

and mocking at his decision, and the latter rewards the hero with two magic helpers (F) carrying away the two mountains after he withstands the test (E).

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^6B^1CD^1E^1\uparrow D^1E^1F^9K^5$

***Dramatis Personae:***

The Old Fool: Hero

The Old Fool's sons and grandsons & Jingcheng's son: Helpers

The Old Fool's wife, the Wise Old Man and the Heavenly God: Donor

Kua'ershi's sons: Helper

Tale 5. Yi Yin Was Born of a Hollow Mulberry Tree

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A girl finds a baby in a hollow mulberry tree ( $F^5$ ). She presents the baby to the king of Youshengshi ( $F^1$ ).

It turns out that before giving birth to this baby, the mother dreamed of a god informing her of an impending disaster ( $B^4$ ) and at the same time warned her not to look back while fleeing from the floodwater ( $\gamma^1$ ). While escaping from the flood ( $\uparrow$ ), however, she looked back at her flooded village ( $\delta^1$ ), and at once was changed into a mulberry tree (U).

The boy soon grows into a virtuous and wise man known as Yi Yin, whom King Tang wishes to have as a companion ( $a^6$ ). King Tang offers to take the king of Youshengshi's daughter to wife and at the same time asks Yi Yin to be given as his daughter's dowry ( $D^{11}$ ). The king of Youshengshi accepts with great pleasure ( $E^{11}$ ) and gives to King Tang ( $K^3$ ) Yi Yin, who offers service to the king upon arrival ( $F^1$ ).

This is a double-move tale with the second move embedded in the first one. The first move falls into the class of L/L, in which the hero King Tang liquidates his lack of Yi Yin, a magic helper. The second move belongs to the class of I-V/P, in which Yi Yin's mother is a victim-hero who takes her departure from home as advised by a god but get punished while escaping from a disaster for failure to observe the god's

interdiction. In the first move, the king of Youshenshi is the donor, who gives away Yi Yin as a dowry for his daughter, and the god who urges Yi Yin's mother to escape from a coming flood is a dispatcher.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $F^5 F^1 | \text{-----} | a^6 D^{11} E^{11} K^3 F^1$

II.  $B^4 \gamma^1 \uparrow \delta^1 U |$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Yi Yin: Helper

Yi Yin's Mother: Heroine

The god in her dream: Dispatcher

The king of Youshenshi: Donor

King Tang: Hero

**Tale 6. Li Bing Fights the River Deity**

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A river god demands two virgins as his wives each year ( $A^{16}$ ). An officer comes to seek Li Bing's instruction as how to deal with the god ( $B^4$ ). Li decides to eliminate the annual threat of the forced marriage even at the risk of his daughter's life (C). He comes to the temple to challenge the river deity ( $\uparrow$ ). Li Bing changes into a bull (T5), and fights the river deity ( $H^1$ ). The fight ends up with Li Bing's victory over the river god ( $I^1$ ), who is later shot to death by Li's chief assistant (U).

This is a single-move tale of the class V/P. Li Bing is the hero who fights and punishes the river god, the villain, with the help of his chief assistant.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $A^{16} B^4 C \uparrow T^5 H^1 I^1 U$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Li Bing: Hero



The river god: Villain

Li's chief assistant: Helper

### Tale 7. A Daughter of King Ying of the State of Chu

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

The story begins with an evil spirit causing illness to a daughter of King Ying of the State of Chu ( $A^{11} + a^6$ ). To answer the king's call for help ( $B^1$ ), Lu Shaoqian sets off for the capital city ( $C^\uparrow$ ). On the way, he meets the spirit who has assumed a human appearance, and who gives him a huge sum of money and asks him to go home ( $\eta^3$ ). He accepts the bribe but continues his journey to the capital by secretly taking another road ( $\theta$ ). A fight then takes place ( $H^6$ ), and Lu Shaoqian exercises his magic power to exorcise the evil spirit ( $I^6$ ). The princess is thus saved from death ( $K^9$ ). The spirit is later found to be a serpent (Ex), killed with small snakes lying dead around it (U).

The king dispatches a public notice ( $B^4$ ) about the disappearance of a huge sum of money from the imperial treasury house ( $a^5$ ). Lu Shaoqian comes to the capital again ( $\uparrow$ ), and returns to the king the money he took from the snake spirit ( $K^v$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class V/P in combination of class L/L. Lu is the hero, who, in the first move, comes to the rescue of the princess regardless of the temptation of money and kills the villain, a snake spirit, by employing magic power, and in the second move, liquidates the lack by sending back to the king the money stolen by the villain. The king plays the role of dispatcher in both moves.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $A^{11} | \text{-----} | \text{Ex U} |$

II.  $a^6 | B^1 C^\uparrow \eta^3 \theta - H^6 I^6 K^9 |$

III.  $B^4 a^5 \uparrow K^v$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Lu Shaoqian: Hero  
 King Ying: Dispatcher  
 The serpent: Villain

## Tale 8. Scholar Tan

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Mr Tan, though forty years old, is not yet married ( $a^1$ ). One night, a beautiful ghost girl appears and offers to be his wife ( $F_9^6$ ). At the same time she asks Tan not to put any light near her at night within the forthcoming three years ( $\gamma^1$ ). They then get married ( $W^*$ ).

One night, Tan, out of curiosity, take a secret look at his wife in lamplight while she is sleeping ( $\delta^1$ ). Since her body is exposed to the lamplight, the ghost has to leave Tan for the nether world ( $K^-$ ). Before she takes her departure, she gives Tan a gown decorated with pearls ( $f^1$ ) and tears off part of his sleeve ( $J^3$ ). Years later, being short of money, Tan sells the gown to a rich man surnamed Wang ( $a^5$ ). Believing the gown-seller to be a tomb-digger, Wang has Tan brought in for interrogation ( $D^2E^2$ ). Wang does not believe that Tan is his son-in-law until after he has his daughter's tomb opened ( $F^{vi}$ ) and finds held in her hand a slip of cloth torn away from the gown ( $Q$ ). Wang gives the gown back to Tan and takes him in as his son-in-law ( $w^0$ ).

This is a three-move tale. The first and third moves are of the same class, *viz.*, L/L, while the middle move falls into the class of I-V/P. The first two moves are joined to each other with the second one starting before the first one comes to an end. Tan is the hero, whose lack of a wife and then of a means of existence is liquidated first by a she-ghost's offer of marriage and later by the gift of a pearl-decorated gown. The ghost acts as both a sought-for person and a donor in this tale. Wang is a helper, who takes in Tan, thus relieving him of poverty.

### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

- I.  $a^1F_9^6 \mid \text{---} \mid W^* \mid$   
 II.  $\gamma^1 \mid \text{-----} \mid \delta^1K-f^1J^3 \mid$   
 III.  $a^5D^2E^2F^{vi}Qw^0$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Mr. Tan: Hero

The ghost: Sought-for person & Donor

Wang: Helper

Tale 9. Panhu

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Panhu is a dog with magical power, and is kept in the emperor's palace ( $F^3$ ). The Rongwu barbarians make frequent attacks in the border region ( $A^{19}$ ), but none of the emperor's generals can eliminate their constant threat to the empire ( $a^2$ ). The emperor calls for help from heroes throughout the country and promises to reward with gold, land and his own daughter's hand in marriage whoever kills the chieftain of the enemy ( $B^1$ ). Panhu sets out for the front ( $C\uparrow$ ), kills the enemy chieftain ( $H^1I^5+U$ ), returns to the palace with his head ( $K^5\downarrow$ ), and is rewarded with a princess as wife ( $*W$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class V/P in combination with the class L/L. Panhu is the hero in this tale, who punishes the villain and is then rewarded with marriage to a princess.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $F^3A^{19} | \text{-----} | U |$

II.  $a^2B^1C\uparrow H^1 | I^5 | \downarrow K^5 *W |$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Panhu: Hero

The Rongwu chieftain: Villain

The emperor: Dispatcher

The princess: Sought-for-person

Tale 10. From Woman into Silkworm

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

A man goes out, leaving behind his daughter and a horse at home ( $\beta^1$ ). Missing her father ( $a^1$ ), she jokingly offers herself in marriage to the horse in return for bringing her father home ( $B^1+\gamma^3$ ). The horse starts out on a journey in search of her father ( $C\uparrow$ ) and soon brings him back to his daughter ( $\downarrow+K^5$ ).

The horse cannot but feel excited beyond control at the sight of the girl ( $a^1$ ). Upon inquiry, the girl tells her father the joke she made with the beast ( $\varepsilon^1\zeta^1$ ). The man at once kills the horse and skins it ( $A^{14}$ ). As the girl is kicking the hide ( $\delta^3$ ), the hide suddenly stands up ( $K^{ix}$ ) and carries her away from her home into a forest (U). The father runs out in pursuit of the horse ( $Pr^2$ ), but it is too late ( $Rs^{10}$ ). When he comes, he finds that the horse has already transformed together with his daughter into a cocoon-spinning silkworm on a tree ( $T^5+^0w$ ). he thus loses his daughter for ever (U).

This is a four-move tale. The first and the third moves are of the class L/L, the second of the class I-V/P, and the last of the class V/P. The horse is the hero, who, in the first move, is dispatched by the girl to get her father home, and in the third move, realises his wish to have the girl as wife in a most unusual form of union after he escapes from the pursuit of the villain. The girl, who is punished for breaking her promise to marry the horse in the second move, acts first as a dispatcher, and then as a sought-for person in her relationship to the horse. She also plays the role of a helper, albeit a hostile one, whose kick at the hide activates the dead horse, and revives it. The girl's father is the villain, who commits the crime of murdering the hero, pursues him, and finally loses his daughter as a punishment for his villainies.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^1 a^1$  | ----- |  $C\uparrow\downarrow+K^5$  |

II.  $B^1+\gamma^3$  | ----- | --- | ----- |  $\delta^3$  | --- | U |

III.  $a^1$  | ----- | --- |  $K^{ix}$  | -- | ----- |  $T^5+^0w$  |

IV.  $\varepsilon^1\zeta^1 A^{14}$  | --- | ---- | -- |  $Pr^2 Rs^{10}$  | ----- | U |

### *Dramatis Personae:*

The father: Villain

His daughter: Dispatcher, Helper & Sought-for person

### Tale 11. Dong Yong

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

The tale starts with the death of Dong's mother and then of his father ( $\beta^2$ ). Being short of money ( $a^5+D^1$ : the hero is faced with the lack of money and at the same time the test as to how to handle the funeral arrangements for his father), Dong Yong sells himself into slavery so as to bury his father with appropriate dignity ( $E^1$ ). Years later, on the way to his master's house ( $\uparrow$ ), Dong runs into a goddess ( $F^6$ ), who is instructed by the Heavenly Emperor to help Dong pay off his debts ( $K^6$ ).

This is a single-move tale of the class L/L. Dong Yong is the hero, who, with the help of his goddess wife, has his lack (of money) liquidated. The Heavenly Emperor is the donor (of a magic helper) in this tale.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^2 a^5 + D^1 E^1 \uparrow F^6 K^6$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Dong Yong: Hero

The goddess: Helper

The Heavenly Emperor: Donor

### Tale 12. Humu Ban

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

On his way out ( $\beta^4$ ), Humu Ban meets with a spirit ( $F^6$ ), who leads him to the palace of Lord Mt. Tai ( $G^3$ ). The god asks him to deliver a letter to his son-in-law, a river god ( $B^1+D^7$ ). With the letter, Humu sets off for the river ( $C\uparrow$ ). A fairy comes out of the water ( $F_{vi}$ ), and leads him to the palace of the river god ( $G^3$ ). In gratitude ( $E^7$ ), the god gives Humu Ban a welcome feast and a pair of silk shoes ( $f^1$ ).

Humu comes out of the water with a letter from the river deity for Lord Mt. Tai ( $D^7$ ). When he arrives at the foot of the mountain, he is greeted by the same spirit he met last time ( $F^{vi}$ ), and is then taken to the palace of Lord of Mt. Tai ( $G^3$ ). Humu Ban hands in the letter ( $E^7$ ) to the god, who exempts Humu Ban's ghost father from hard labour and makes him the god of his home village ( $F^9$ ) as a reward for his delivery of letters. After that, Humu Ban leaves Mt. Tai for home ( $\downarrow$ ).

In the year that follows, the ghost father causes Humu Ban's children to die one after another ( $A^{22}+a^1$ ). He starts out for Mt. Tai ( $\uparrow$ ) to seek help ( $B^4$ ). Lord Mt. Tai punishes the ghost father by dismissing him from the post of village god (U). He returns ( $\downarrow$ ) to find all his children safe and sound at home ( $K^9$ ).

This is a three-move tale. The first two moves belong to the class T-R/R, and the third one is of the class of V/P in combination with L/L. Humu Ban is the hero of the story. In the first two moves, he delivers letters for the Lord of Mt. Tai and his son-in-law, and is rewarded by the two gods. Humu Ban's ghost father is the villain who causes death to his grandsons, although unintentionally, and provokes retribution for himself. The Lord of Mt. Tai goes through two different spheres of actions in this story: as a dispatcher, he sends the hero to deliver a letter for him, and as a helper, he terminates the tragedy for the hero by punishing the villain. The river deity is also a dual-role character: a dispatcher like the Lord of Mt. Tai, and a donor (a pair of shoes, objects of material value). The mountain spirit and the river fairy are both helpers who transfer the hero between two different worlds.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^4 F^6 G^3 B^1 + D^7 C \uparrow F_{vi} E^7 G^3 f^1$

II.  $D^7 F^{vi} G^3 E^7 F^9 \downarrow$

III.  $A^{22} + a^1 \uparrow B^4 U \downarrow K^9$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Humu Ban: Hero

The Lord of Mt. Tai: Dispatcher & Helper

The river god: Dispatcher & Donor

His ghost father: Villain



Tale 13. The Tomb of Three Kings

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

The King of Chu kills Moye, a sword-maker ( $A^{14}$ ). Moye's wife later informs his posthumous son, Chibi, of his father's tragic death and his last words ( $B^4$ ). The boy follows Moye's instruction ( $D^3E^3$ ) and finds a sword under a tree ( $F^5$ ).

The king dreams of Chibi seeking to avenge his father's death ( $\zeta^1$ ). He offers a reward for Chibi's head ( $A^{13}$ ), so Chibi flees home ( $\uparrow$ ). He meets a stranger on the way ( $F^6$ ), and upon inquiry, reveals his family's tragedy ( $B^4$ ). The stranger offers to take revenge for him (C). Chibi cuts off his own head and hands it to the stranger together with his sword ( $F^1$ ). With Chibi's head and his sword, the stranger comes to the king's palace ( $\uparrow$ ). Seizing the opportunity of the king's momentary inattention, the stranger chops off his head ( $I^5$ ), which drops into a cauldron (U).

This is a double-move tale of the class T-R/R in combination of V/P. Chibi begins as a hero who obtains a magic sword left behind by Moye with the help of his mother and then becomes a provider (of the sword). The stranger is the hero, who takes revenge on behalf of Chibi for his father's death and kills the king with the sword.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $A^{14}B^4D^3E^3F^5$  | ----- | U  
II.  $\zeta^2A^{13}\uparrow F^6B^4CF^1\uparrow I^5$  |

***Dramatis Personae:***

Moye: Donor

Moye's wife: Helper

Chibi: Hero & Dispatcher

The stranger: Hero

The king: Villain

Tale 14. Liang Fu

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

There occurs a serious drought ( $D^1+a^6$ ). The governor prays for rain by exposing himself to the scorching sun ( $E-$ ) but to little avail ( $F-$ ). Liang Fu, who is assistant governor, volunteers to sacrifice his life for rain ( $D^1E^1$ ). Gods and spirits are moved to bring heavy rain ( $F^9K^5$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class L/L in combination of T-R/R. The two moves in it are interwoven with each other in that the lack or misfortune, which fails to be liquidated in the first move, is brought to an end in the second one. The governor acts as a hero in the first move, although he fails to get rain for his people. The hero in the second move is Liang Fu, who is rewarded with rain for his self-sacrificial spirit.

### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $D^1+a^6E-F-|-----|K^5$

II.  $D^1E^1F^9|$

### ***Dramatis Personae:***

The governor: Hero

Liang Fu: Hero

Gods and spirits: Donor

### **Tale 15. Ding's Wife**

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Unable to bear her mother-in-law's maltreatment ( $A^{20}$ ), Ding's wife hangs herself ( $a^6$ : loss/lack of life). However, her ghost lingers on, frequently revealing its presence in various ways ( $K_{ix}$ ).

On the way to her hometown ( $\uparrow$ ), the ghost comes to a river ( $a^6$ : lack of means of crossing the river). She asks two fishermen for a ferry ( $D^1$ ), but they respond to her request in a rude and indecorous way ( $E+A^{21}$ ). She then turns to an old man for help ( $D^1$ ), he agrees without hesitation ( $E^1$ ) and soon ferries her across ( $K^4$ ). The two

fishermen are later found drowned in the river (F=). In contrast, the old man is rewarded with a boatful of fish (f<sup>1</sup>).

This is a four-move tale of the class L/L in combination of the class T-R/R. The first move, although brief and short, is a self-contained one that starts with the heroine losing her life and ends with her revival as a supernatural being. In contrast, the following three moves are intermingled with each other in that a new move starts before the previous one comes to an end.

Ding's wife, or rather the ghost of Ding's wife, acts as a heroine in this story. She liquidates her lacks, first of life and then of the means of crossing the river. She is also a donor of fish as a reward for the old man helping her cross the river. The two fishermen act as a villain and end up drowned as punishment for assaulting the heroine with obscenities.

#### Function Scheme of the Tale:

I. A<sup>20</sup>a<sup>6</sup>K<sub>ix</sub>

II. ↑a<sup>6</sup>|-----|-----|K<sup>4</sup>|

III. D<sup>1</sup>E-+A<sup>21</sup>|-----|---|F=|

IV. D<sup>1</sup>E<sup>1</sup>|---|----|f<sup>1</sup>|

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

The ghost of Ding's wife: Heroine & Donor

Mother-in-law: Villain

The two fishermen: Villain

An old man: Helper

#### Tale 16. An Old Fox of Wuxing

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Two young men are working in the fields (β<sup>3</sup>) when a fox spirit, disguised as their father, comes to beat them (A<sup>20</sup>). The sons return home and complain to their mother (B<sup>4</sup>). Seeing through the trick, the farmer orders his two sons to kill the fox spirit when caught playing the trick again (B<sup>2</sup>+γ<sup>2</sup>).

The two sons go to work in the fields as instructed ( $C^{\uparrow}$ ). Worried about his two sons, the father comes to the fields to see what is happening ( $\delta^{\dagger}$ ). His two sons take him for the fox spirit and kill him with their hoes as instructed ( $U+A^{14}$ : this situation is of double functional significance, in which the father is punished for his violation of the interdiction set by himself, and his two sons commit the crime of patricide).

The fox spirit then assumes the appearance of the father and comes to live with the family ( $A^{12}$ ). A Daoist priest comes by and feels suspicious about the father ( $F^6$ ). He forces the fox spirit to reveal its true self (Ex), and helps the two sons drive the fox out of its hiding place ( $H^6I^6$ ) and kill it on the spot (U). Later, the sons die in great sorrow (U).

This is a three-move tale of a rather complicated morphological structure, with the second move (I-V/P) embedded in the first one (V/P), and the third move (V/P) and the first one commingled with each other. The father is a dispatcher, who sends his two sons to kill the fox spirit but falls victim of the spirit's trick. The two sons begin as (unintentional) villains who unwittingly commit the crime of patricide, and then become heroes who avenge their father on the fox spirit with the help of the priest.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $\beta^3 A^{20} B^4 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | A^{12} F^6 \text{Ex} H^6 I^6 U |$   
 II.  $B^2 + \gamma^2 C^{\uparrow} \delta^{\dagger} | U |$   
 III.  $A^{14} | \text{-----} | U$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

The farmer: Dispatcher

The two sons: Villain & Hero

The fox spirit: Villain

The Daoist priest: Helper

Tale 17. Li Ji

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

A serpent devours people ( $A^{14}$ ) and demands virgins as sacrifice ( $A^{17}+B^4$ ). Li Ji offers to sacrifice herself regardless of her parents' objection (C). With a sword given by her parents ( $f^1$ ), she starts off with a dog for the temple devoted to the snake ( $\uparrow$ ). The girl strikes the sword at the head of the monster ( $H^6I^v$ ) and kills it with the help of the dog (U). She returns to her home village a heroine ( $\downarrow$ ), and is later made queen by the king ( $**W$ ).

This is a single-move tale of the class V/P. The snake is the villain, who commits crimes of devouring people and demanding virgins as sacrificial offerings, and ends up slain by the heroine, Li Ji. Li Ji's parents play the role of donor (of a sword). The dog is a helper to the heroine in her fight with the villain.

### Function Scheme of the Tale:

I.  $A^{14}A^{17}+B^4Cf^1\uparrow H^6I^vU\downarrow **W$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

The snake: Villain

Li Ji: Heroine

Li Ji's parents: Donor

The dog: Helper

### Tale 18. The Goddess of the White River

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Xie Duan is an orphan ( $\beta^2$ ) and lives by himself ( $a^1$ ). Being a man of virtue, he never does anything wrong to other people ( $D^1E^1$ ). One day he picks up a big snail and takes it home as a rarity ( $F^5$ ). From this moment on, every day when he comes home from work, there is a meal ready and waiting for him ( $F^9$ ). Confused, he asks one of his neighbours who has prepared the food ( $\varepsilon^{ji}$ ), but is told that a woman is seen doing housework for him when he is away from home ( $\zeta^{ii}$ ). Finding this too good to be true, he asks another neighbour ( $\varepsilon^{ji}$ ), and gets the same reply ( $\zeta^{ii}$ ). Days later, he sees a girl coming out of a jar to do housework for him ( $\varepsilon^{ji}\zeta^{ii}$ ). Upon request, she admits that she is the Goddess of the White River and has come by order of the Heavenly

Emperor to help Xie keep his house ( $\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii} + \delta^l$ : Xie Duan violates an interdiction, although inadvertently, because the mission and real identity of an immortal are not supposed to be known to a mortal).

Unable to continue her secret mission of helping Xie, the goddess leaves the shell ( $F^1$ ) to Xie before rising to Heaven ( $K^-$ ). With the help of the magic shell, Xie soon rids himself of poverty ( $K^6$ ) and gets married ( $W^*$ ).

This is a double-move tale, with the first move belonging to the class L/L and the second one to the class I-V/P. The two moves are interconnected with each other in the sense that the lack ( $a^1$ ) appearing in the first move is liquidated ( $W^*$ ) in the second one. The second move begins with the hero's unconscious violation of an interdiction, which leads to the negative result of function K. The goddess of the White River is both a helper and donor (of the magic shell), and the Heavenly Emperor is also a donor (of a magic helper) in this tale.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $\beta^2 a^1 D^1 E^1 F^5 F^9 (\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii}) \times 2 \varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii} | F^1 | \text{----} | K^6 W^*$   
 II.  $\delta^l | \text{---} | K^- |$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Xie Duan: Hero

The goddess of the White River: Helper & Donor

The Heavenly Emperor: Donor

#### Tale 19. Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Liu and Ruan ascend a mountain ( $\beta^4$ ). They lose their way ( $a^6$ ), and, to make matters worse, their food is running out ( $a^5$ ). Suddenly, a peach tree comes into their view ( $F^5$ ). They climb to the tree and pick the fruit to eat ( $K^4$ ). They then see a bowl of rice floating down a stream ( $F^6$ ). They wade upstream ( $G^4$ ), and are led by two beautiful fairies ( $F_9^6$ ) into a magnificent house ( $K^5$ ).



Soon, Liu and Ruan begin to feel homesick ( $a^6$ ). The two fairies wish them to stay with them ( $D^1$ ), but they insist on going home ( $E-$ ). When they arrive at their home village ( $\downarrow$ ), they find their parents, relatives and friends all dead ( $F=$ ), their homes gone and their village changed beyond recognition ( $K-$ ). Nobody in the village knows who they are ( $o$ ), and, disappointed, they leave for a place nobody knows ( $\uparrow$ ).

This is a three-move tale of the class L/L. The second move is embedded in the first one, and both of them have a positive ending. The third move is quite a self-contained one that starts with a new form of lack but ends without the lack liquidated due to the two young men acting against the fairies' wish. Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao are the heroes, whose misfortunes are eliminated with the help of the fairies, who are also a donor of a bowl of rice, which leads them to the fairy country.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^4 a^6 | \text{-----} | F^6 G^4 F_9^6 K^5 |$

II.  $a^5 F^5 K^4 |$

III.  $a^6 D^1 E - \downarrow F = K - o \uparrow$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Liu & Ruan: Hero

The two fairies: Donor & Helper

Tale 20. Wild Cats

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

A filial son builds a hut for himself beside his mother's coffin in a mountain to observe the mourning period ( $\beta^2$ ). A wild cat spirit transforms itself into a woman, and comes to ask for lodging for the night ( $\eta^1$ ). The young man agrees to her request ( $\theta^1$ ). While sleeping by a fire, the woman is revealed to be a wild cat ( $Ex$ ), holding a black chicken in its claws ( $A^{22}$ ). The young man kills the cat spirit and throws its corpse into a nearby pit ( $U$ ).

The next day, a man comes to question the filial son about the whereabouts of his wife and has him tied up and taken to court for murdering his wife (L). As the body of the killed wild cat has turned into that of a woman, the filial son is presented with a difficult task of proving to the county magistrate his innocence of homicide (M). By order of the county magistrate ( $B^2$ ), a hunter appears at court ( $C^\uparrow$ ) with a dog ( $F^{vi}$ ). At sight of the dog, the man reveals his real self as a wild cat (Ex), and is killed on the spot (U). Meanwhile, the body of the dead woman brought in by the man also changes back into that of a wild cat (N).

This is a double-move tale of the class V/P. The wild cat is the villain who commits the crime of theft and ends up killed after her crime is exposed by the firelight, and her husband is a false hero, who brings an unfounded charge against the hero. In the first move, the filial son is the hero who punishes the villain, and the hunter is the hero in the second move, where he brings in a dog in response to the summons of the magistrate, who is a dispatcher. The dog acts as a magic helper.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^2 \eta^1 \theta^1 A^{22} ExU$

II.  $LMB^2 C^\uparrow F^{vi} ExUN$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

The filial son: Hero

The woman: Villain

The man: False Hero

The county magistrate: Dispatcher

The hunter: Hero

The dog: Helper

Tale 21. The Lad Who Bought Powder

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A young man falls in love with a powder girl and frequents her store on the pretence of buying powder ( $a^1$ ). Upon inquiry, he reveals his admiration for her ( $D^2E^2$ ). The girl is moved by his sincerity and agrees to meet him secretly in his room ( $f^9$ ).

The young man is so excited to see the girl come that he suddenly collapses and dies ( $a^1$ ). The parents are shocked at the sudden death of their son ( $B^8$ ). They make a thorough search in his room ( $\varepsilon^1$ ) and find evidence to implicate the powder girl ( $\zeta^1$ ). They take her to court, accusing her of murdering their son ( $L$ ). With dozens of powder boxes of different sizes found in the young man's room, the powder girl cannot convince the court of her innocence ( $M$ ). She asks the judge for permission to pay her last respect to the dead body of the young man ( $B^3$ ). When she comes in sight of the body ( $\uparrow$ ), she cannot help but cry over their short-lived love ( $D^1E^1$ ). The soul of young man is stirred by her crying to return to the dead body ( $F^9$ ). His resuscitation ( $K^9$ ) clears the powder girl of murder ( $N$ ), thus exposing the false accusation brought by his parents against the heroine ( $Ex$ ). The young man then marries the powder girl and has many children with her ( $W^*$ ).

This is a three-move tale with the first two moves falling into the class L/L and the last one T-R/R. In the first move, the young man is the hero, who marries the girl as he wishes, and in the second move, a helper, albeit a passive one, who helps clear the wrongly accused heroine. Apart from being a sought-for person in the first move, the powder girl is the heroine in the following two moves, where she first falls victim of a false accusation, and solves the difficulty of proving herself innocent through the revival of the young man. The soul of the young man is a donor of life, who raises the young man from the dead by returning to the dead body in response to the heroine's beseeching. The judge is a dispatcher, who lets the heroine go to mourn for the death of the young man.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^1D^2E^2f^9$  | ----- | ----- | ---- | ---- |  $W^*$

II.  $a^1B^8\varepsilon^1\zeta^1LM$  | ----- |  $K^9$  |  $NEx$

III.  $B^3\uparrow D^1E^1F^9$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

The young man: Hero & Helper

The powder girl: Sought-for person & Heroine

The parents: False hero

The soul: Donor

The judge: Dispatcher

## Tale 22. Guang, a Native of Yuhang

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Guang proposes marriage to an old man's daughter but is rejected ( $a^1$ ). When the old man dies ( $a^6$ : lack of father on the part of the girl), Guang answers the call for help ( $B^1$ ), but when he comes to her house ( $C^\uparrow$ ), he finds a group of ghosts playing with the dead body of the old man ( $A^{20}$ ). With a cudgel in his hand, he rushes in ( $H^5$ ), and drive all of them out of the house ( $I^6$ ) except an old one who is too slow to make his escape. The old ghost pleads with Guang to release him ( $D^4$ ), but Guang does not set him free ( $E^4$ ) until he calls back the soul of the old man ( $F^1$ ). The old man is thus resuscitated ( $K^9$ ). In gratitude, the old man's daughter marries him ( $W^*$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class of L/L. Guang is the hero, who revives the old man and liquidates his own lack of a wife. The daughter plays the role of sought-for person in her relationship to the hero. She is also a dispatcher, upon whose request, the hero comes to her house. The ghosts together play the role of villain but are left unpunished. The old ghost caught by Guang can also be counted as a donor in this story, although an unwilling one, who has the old man's soul called back in exchange for freedom.

### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^1$  |-----|  $W^*$

II.  $a^6 B^1 C^\uparrow A^{20} H^5 I^6 D^4 E^4 F^1 K^9$  |

### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Guang: Hero

The old man's daughter: Sought-for person & Dispatcher

A group of ghosts: Villain

Tale 23. A Native of Fuyang

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Wang goes to a pond to catch crabs ( $\beta^1$ ). A mountain elf transforms itself into a cudgel ( $\eta^3$ ), steals into Wang's basket in the pond and eats up all the crabs caught in it ( $A^5$ ). Wang takes out the cudgel from the basket and puts it back into the water again after mending it ( $\theta^3$ ). After the third time the monster repeats the trick, Wang begins to feel suspicious about the cudgel, and decides to take it home and burn it ( $\theta^-$ ). On the way, the mountain elf transforms back into its self and begs for mercy ( $\eta^1$ ). Wang makes no response ( $\theta^-$ ). The monster then asks Wang's name with the intention of casting a spell on him ( $\eta^1$ ), but Wang does not comply ( $\theta^-$ ). At last the monster has to resign itself to its fate and ends up burnt to death (U).

This is a single-move tale, of the class V/P. The story begins with the villainy committed by the mountain elf and evolves around the function pair, the villain's deception or persuasion ( $\eta$ ) and the hero's response to the deceit ( $\theta$ ). Wang is the hero who falls victim of the trick of the mountain elf in the first place and, after seeing through the trick, punishes the villain.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^1 \eta^3 A^5 \theta^3 (\eta^3 \theta^3) \times 2 \eta^3 \theta^- (\eta^1 \theta^-) \times 2 U$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Wang: Hero

The mountain elf: Villain

Tale 24. Huang Miao

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

In order to be exempted from punishment for overstaying his leave and to be granted another holiday ( $a^6$ ), Huang Miao comes to a temple ( $\uparrow$ ) to pray to the temple god,

promising to offer sacrifice to the temple if his two wishes are realised ( $\gamma^3$ ). Soon, his wishes come true one by one ( $F^9K^4$ ). On the way to his hometown for holiday ( $\uparrow$ ), he makes a detour around the temple without presenting any sacrificial offerings to the god ( $\delta^3$ ). In anger, the god has him removed from his post (U).

He is turned into a cannibal ( $a^6$ ), and is ordered to devour thirty people to atone for his sin ( $B^1+D^1$ ). Huang Miao take five years to hunt down thirty people ( $\uparrow E^1$ ). The temple god then gives him a bowl of salted rice ( $F^1$ ). After eating the rice ( $F^7$ ), Huang Miao is transformed back to his real self ( $T^6$ ), regaining his human nature and original appearance ( $K^5$ ). The god lets him go home ( $\downarrow$ ).

This is a three-move tale with each move belonging to a different class, the first and the third moves being of the class L/L, and the second I-V/P. The first two moves are interrelated to each other, while the third stands much as a self-contained one.

Morphologically speaking, Huang Miao is a hero, who, with the help of the temple god, has his wishes liquidated one by one. Although he incurs a severe punishment in the second move, he is punished not for committing a villainy against a personage (A) but for failing to keep his promise to the temple god ( $\delta$ ). The temple god goes through three different spheres of action in this tale: as a helper, he makes Huang's wishes come true, as a dispatcher, he releases Huang to devour people after turning him into a cannibal, and as a donor, he gives Huang a bowl of salted rice, the magic power of which transforms him back into a man.

#### Function Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $a^6\uparrow|----|F^9K^4|$   
 II.  $\gamma^3\uparrow|-----|\delta^3U|$   
 III.  $a^6B^1+D^1\uparrow E^1F^1F^7T^6K^5\downarrow$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Huang Miao: Hero

The temple god: Helper, Dispatcher & Donor

Tale 25. Xu Tiejiu



### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Years after the death of his mother ( $\beta^2$ ), Tiechu is tortured to death by his stepmother surnamed Chen ( $A^{14}$ ). The ghost of Tiechu comes out at night ( $\uparrow$ ) to haunt the house ( $H^8$ ). Scared out of her senses, Chen asks for mercy ( $I^8$ ). The ghost keeps haunting the house until his stepmother loses her own son (U). After that, the ghost returns to where it belongs to ( $\downarrow$ ).

This is a single-move tale of the class V/P. Chen is the villain, who tortures Tiechu to death. Tiechu, or rather the ghost of the boy, is the hero, who punishes the villain for her maltreating and murdering her stepson.

### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^2 A^{14} \uparrow H^8 I^8 U \downarrow$

### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Chen: Villain

The ghost of Tiechu: Hero

## **Tale 26. Hou Yu**

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Hou Yu sees four big stones on his way to Jianmen ( $\beta^4$ ). Attracted by their strange shape, Hou picks them up and puts them into his book basket ( $D^1 E^1$ ). When he opens the basket some time later, he finds that they have all turned into gold ( $f^1$ ). He sells the gold, and returns home ( $\downarrow$ ) a man of great wealth ( $(K^6)$ ), accompanied by dozens of beautiful young women bought at market ( $W^*$ ).

One day, Hou Yu is having a picnic with his wives and concubines ( $\beta^4$ ) when a shabby-looking old man comes over and helps himself to the food without having being invited ( $D^1$ ). Annoyed, Hou tries to drive the old man out of his sight ( $E-$ ). All of a sudden, the old man puts all his women in his book basket and runs away with it ( $F=$ ). Hou gives an order to chase after the old man ( $Pr^8$ ), but fails to catch him

(Rs<sup>11</sup>). With fortunes and wives all gone (K-), Hou sets off on a long and lonely journey, mocked and teased on the way to his hometown, (↓)

This is a two-move tale of the class T-R/R. Hou Yu begins as a hero who is rewarded with magical stones for his appreciation of their shape, but turns into a villain who ends up with all his fortunes gone in the blink of an eye. The old man plays the role of donor in this tale, although he does not make a physical appearance in the first move.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^4 D^1 E^1 f^1 \downarrow K^6 W^*$

II.  $\beta^4 D^1 E^1 - F = Pr^8 Rs^{11} K - \downarrow$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Hou Yu: Hero & Villain

The old man: Donor

#### Tale 27. Yang Bao

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Yang Bao calls on his friend ( $\beta^4$ ), who has nothing with which to feed Yang so decides to kill his dog in order to make Yang a meal ( $d^7$ ). Out of sympathy, Yang asks his friend not to kill it ( $E^7$ ). His friend agrees, and Yang takes the dog home and keep it as a pet ( $F^1 \downarrow$ ).

One day when Yang's wife and her lover are attempting to kill Yang ( $A^{14}$ ), the dog throws itself at them and wounds them seriously ( $H^5 I^v$ ). Yang's life is saved, and his wife and her lover are brought to justice (U).

This is a two-move tale. The first move falls under class T-R/R and the second one class V/P. In the first move, Yang Bao is the hero, who saves a dog from being killed and eaten. Yang's friend is an (inadvertent) donor of the dog, a magic agent, which acts as a hero, fighting the villain to save Yang's life in the second move. Yang's wife and her lover are villains who are punished for attempting to murder Yang.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^4 d^7 E^7 F^1 \downarrow$

II.  $A^{14} H^5 T^v U$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Yang Bao: Hero

Yang's friend: Donor

His wife and her lover: Villain

The dog: Hero

### Tale 28. Madam Three at Ban Bridge

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

On his way to Luoyang, Zhao Jihe stops at an inn for the night at Ban Bridge ( $\beta^4$ ). He finds to his surprise ( $\varepsilon^2 \zeta^2$ ) that Madam Three the innkeeper transforms her guests into donkeys by tricking them into eating her cakes ( $A^{11}$ ), and seizes their belongings ( $A^5$ ). Without eating her cakes, Zhao leaves the inn the next morning ( $\eta^2 \theta^-$ ).

In order to obtain the magic gadgets used by Madam Three in her trick ( $a^2$ ), Zhao returns to Banqiao on his way back from Luoyang and stays overnight at the inn ( $\uparrow$ ). He keeps himself awake the whole night, spying on Madam Three ( $\varepsilon^2 \zeta^2$ ). The next morning when she offers the cakes to Zhao for breakfast ( $\eta^2 + D^{12}$ ), Zhao does not eat them ( $\theta^-$ ). Rather he deceives the innkeeper into eating her own cakes ( $E^{12}$ ), and transform her into a donkey ( $U + a^6$ : the punishment the villain receives takes the form of loss/lack of human appearance). Zhao rides the donkey and runs away with all her magical gadgets ( $KF^8$ ). Years later, an old man stops Zhao Jihe riding the donkey ( $F_9^6$ ), and gets Madam Three out of the animal and restores her to her former self ( $T^6 + K^5$ ).

This is a three-move tale, with the first move belonging to class V/P and the second and third ones class L/L. Zhao Jihe is the hero, who sees through the trick played by the villain Madam Three on her guests, and punishes her using her own trick. Madam Three acts as a villain in this tale but also as a donor, a hostile one,

who sets a trap for her guests but falls victim of her own trick and loses all her magic gadgets to the hero. In the third move, the role of the innkeeper is changed into a heroine who has her lack of human appearance liquidated by an old man.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $\beta^4 \varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 A^{11} A^5 \eta^2 \theta - \text{-----} | U |$   
 II.  $a^2 \uparrow \varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 \eta^2 + D^{12} \theta - E^{12} | \text{---} | \text{---} | KF^8 |$   
 III.  $a^1 | \text{----} | F_9^6 T^6 + K^5$

### Dramatis Personae:

Zhao Jihe: Hero

Madam Three: Villain, Donor & Heroine

The old man: Helper

### Tale 29. Lady Taiyin

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Lu Qi is a young man too poor to get married ( $a^1$ ). He goes to ask his neighbour, Ma, for help, and upon inquiry, reveals to Ma his admiration for Lady Taiyin, a goddess ( $D^2 E^2$ ). Ma agrees to make a match for him ( $F^9$ ) on the condition that Lu Qi consumes no meat or wine for three days ( $D^1$ ). Lu does as he was told in the following three days ( $E^1$ ) and is then taken ( $F^9$ ) to meet the goddess ( $G^3$ ).

Lady Taiyin exhorts Lu to abstain from eating meat for another seven days ( $D^1$ ) and then gives him two pills ( $F^1$ ). Lu comes home with Ma ( $\downarrow$ ) and fasts for seven days ( $E^1$ ). The two pills soon grow into two big gourds ( $F^{vi}$ ), which carry Ma and Lu to Heaven ( $G^1$ ). The goddess gives Lu three choices ( $D^1$ ) and Lu chooses to live in the Crystal Palace with her ( $E^1$ ). The goddess asks him not to change his mind ( $\gamma^1 + D^7$ ), but when asked by an envoy of the Heavenly Emperor about his choice ( $D^2$ ), Lu answers after a long silence ( $E^2$ ) that he prefers to be Prime Minister of China rather than be husband of Lady Taiyin ( $\delta^1 + E^-$ ). Lu is pushed into the gourd ( $F=$ ) and sent back to his dilapidated house in the world of mortals ( $\downarrow$ ) with none of his wishes fulfilled ( $K-$ ).

This is a two-move tale of the class L/L in combination of the class T-R/R. The first move starts with Lu Qi feeling the lack of a wife and is interrupted by the second move in which Lu Qi provokes retribution by being reduced to the former state of being poor and wifeless for his negative reaction to the request of Lady Taiyin. Lu Qi is the hero, who fails to liquidate his lack due to his failure to withstand the test. Ma is a magical helper, who helps Lu the hero transfer from the world of mortals to Heaven. Lady Taiyin acts as a sought-for person, whom the hero wishes to marry, and also as a donor, who gives the hero two magic pills which grow into big gourds.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $a^1 D^2 E^2 F^9 D^1 E^1 F^9 G^3 D^1 F^1 \downarrow E^1 F^{vi} G^1 | \text{-----} | K-$   
 II.  $D^1 E^1 \gamma^1 + D^7 D^2 E^2 \delta^1 + E - F = \downarrow |$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Lu Qi: Hero

Lady Taiyin: Sought-for person & Donor

Ma: Helper

Tale 30. Wu Kan

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Wu Kan's parents died when he was very young ( $\beta^2$ ). Since then, Wu Kan has lived all by himself ( $a^1$ ). He works hard at his humble post and tries to protect a brook from being polluted ( $D^1 E^1$ ).

One day he finds a white spiral shell near the brook. He picks it up and takes it home ( $F^6$ ). From then on, whenever Wu Kan returns from work, he will find a meal already prepared for him ( $F^9$ ). He is puzzled and asks his neighbours about who does it for him ( $\varepsilon^{ji}$ ), and is told that a young woman does housework for him when he is away to work ( $\zeta^{ii}$ ). He cannot believe their story until he sees with his own eyes a young lady coming from the spiral shell to do housework ( $\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii}$ ). Upon inquiry, the lady reveals that she has been sent by the Heavenly Emperor to be his wife and keep

the house for him as a reward for his loyalty to his job and his care for the brook (W\*).

The county magistrate attempts to seize the goddess from Wu Kan ( $a^1$ ). He orders Wu to get him a toad's hair and a ghost's arm (M), and his wife helps ( $F^9$ ) Wu fulfil the difficult task (N). And then he orders Wu Kan to get him a *wudou*, a fire-emitting animal (M). With the help of the goddess ( $F^9$ ), Wu Kan brings him the animal ( $N+F^3$ : He fulfils the difficult task and at the same time has a magic agent prepared). The magistrate puts him in prison ( $A^{15}$ ). The animal discharges a fire in the magistrate's official residence ( $F^9$ ) and burns him and his family to death (U).

This is a two-move tale with the first move belonging to class L/L and the second one V/P. Wu Kan is the hero, and his goddess wife is a magical helper, and a sought-for person. The magistrate is the villain, who ends up burnt to death. The Heavenly Emperor is the donor of the spiral shell, albeit in an indirect way, and he is also a dispatcher who sends the goddess down from Heaven to be Wu's wife. In this story, the fire-emitting animal, *wudou*, is also a magical helper.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^2 a^1 D^1 E^1 F^6 F^9 (\varepsilon^{ii} \zeta^{ii}) \times 2 W^*$

II.  $a^1 M F^9 N M F^9 N + F^3 A^{15} F^9 U$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Wu Kan: Hero

Wu's wife: Sought-for person & Helper

The Heavenly Emperor: Donor & Dispatcher

*Wudou*: Helper

The county magistrate: Villain

Tale 31. An Old Man of Xiangyang

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text:



An old man gives an axe to a young carpenter by the name of Bin Hua ( $F^1$ ) and, at the same time, warns him against having affairs with women ( $\gamma^1$ ). While working in the house of a rich man surnamed Wang, Bin Hua is attracted by the beauty of Wang's daughter ( $a^1$ ). He steals into her room one night and rapes her ( $A^{21}+\delta^1$ ), but afterwards wins her heart ( $K^4$ ).

With their affair exposed ( $\varepsilon^2\zeta^2$ ), Wang decides to send away the carpenter, who offers to make Wang a wooden crane that can fly to repay his kindness ( $\eta^1$ ). Wang accepts his offer ( $\theta^1$ ). Bin Hua asks Wang to keep off meat and women for a period of time if he wants the wooden crane to fly ( $\eta^3$ ). Wang does as told ( $\theta^3$ ). The carpenter seizes the chance to fly secretly on the wooden crane with Wang's daughter to Xiangyang ( $A^1$ ). Finding that his daughter has eloped with Bin Hua ( $B^8$ ), Wang sets off for Xiangyang ( $\uparrow$ ) and reports the case to the governor of Xiangyang Prefecture, who has Bin Hua arrested and beaten to death at court (U).

This is a two-move tale of the class I-V/P in combination with the class V/P. Morphologically Wang might be counted as a seeker-hero. For example, he falls victim to the villain's deception and persuasion ( $\eta\theta$ ), goes in pursuit of his abducted daughter ( $\uparrow$ ), and at last, with the help of the governor of Xiangyang, brings the villain to justice (U). The story, however, revolves mainly around the nuclear pair functions *Interdiction* and *Violation of Interdiction*, in which Bin Hua is a central figure, who fails to abide by the interdiction set to him by his donor and ends up beaten to death for a series of villainies he has committed. Wang's daughter is the sought-for person in this tale.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $F^1\gamma^1a^1A^{21}+\delta^1K^4|-----|U$

II.  $\varepsilon^2\zeta^2\eta^1\theta^1\eta^3\theta^3A^1B^8\uparrow|$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Bin Hua: Villain

Wang: Hero

The old man of Xiangyang: Donor

Wang's daughter: Sought-for person

Tale 32. Dou Ning's Concubine

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Dou Ning already has a concubine at home but he wishes to take Cui to wife ( $a^1$ ). Cui demands the expulsion of the concubine ( $D^1+A^9$ ). Dou murders his concubine and her twin newborn babies ( $E^1+A^{14}$ ), and then marries Cui ( $W^*$ ).

Years later, Dou Ning's ghost father warns his son of his murdered concubine seeking revenge ( $\gamma^2$ ), but Dou Ning dismisses the warning as a dirty trick ( $\delta^4$ ). When the ghost of the murdered concubine returns to take revenge on Dou's family, Dou sends for a monk ( $B^1$ ). He comes to his help immediately ( $C^\uparrow$ ). When confronted with the ghost, the monk requires that she should not haunt Dou's house and interfere in human affairs (L). The ghost retorts ( $H^7$ ) by accusing the monk of being partial to and siding with the murderer against the victim (Ex). Ashamed of his behaviour, the monk leaves Dou's house in disgrace ( $I^7$ ). The ghost haunts the household everyday until Dou Ning and his two daughters die (U) and Cui is forced to become a nun (U).

This is a three-move tale, with the first two moves falling under class V/P, and the third one class V-I/P. Dou Ning is the villain who commits the crime of murdering his concubine and her twin newborn baby girls and incurs due retribution in the end. Cui is also a villain because she demands the expulsion of the heroine and ends up forced to spend her rest of her life in a nunnery. The ghost woman is a victim-heroine, who makes unremitting efforts to seek revenge and finally brings the villains to justice. The role of the monk functions as a false hero who stands on the villain's side and brings an unfounded charge against the victim heroine.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^1$  | ----- |  $E^1+A^{14}W^*$  | ----- - | U |

II.  $D^1+A^9$  | ----- | ----- | --- | U |

III.  $\gamma^2\delta^4B^1C^\uparrow LH^7ExI^7$  |

***Dramatis Personae:***

Dou Ning: Villain

Cui: Sought-for person & Villain

The ghost: Heroine

The monk: False hero

### Tale 33: Yang Wengbo

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

After his parents die ( $\beta^2$ ), Yang Wengbo buries them on the top of a mountain, where there is no water ( $a^5$ ). His filial piety towards his deceased parents moves the Heavenly Emperor ( $D^1E^1$ ), who makes a spring of water flow uphill from the foot of the mountain ( $F^9K^4$ ).

Yang diverts the course of the spring so that other people can share the water with him ( $D^1E^1$ ). Then there comes a man riding a horse ( $F^6$ ). After his horse drinks the spring water, he gives Yang some cobbles ( $F^1$ ) and asks him to grow them in the soil ( $D^7$ ). Yang does as requested ( $E^7$ ) and soon white jade grows out of the earth ( $F^{vi}$ ). He is then carried by a young god to an immortal island ( $G^3$ ), where he is advised to present some jade to the Heavenly Emperor ( $D^6$ ). Yang does as advised without reluctance ( $E^6$ ).

Yang Wengbo makes a marriage proposal to the daughter of Xu ( $a^1$ ), who asks for some white jade as a betrothal gift ( $D^7$ ). Yang gives Xu two pieces of jade ( $E^7$ ), and gets the father's permission to marry his daughter ( $W^*$ ). Years later, a dragon comes ( $F^9$ ) and carries Yang and his wife up to Heaven ( $G^2$ ) away from the world of mortals ( $w^0$ ).

This is a four-move tale, with the first and the last moves being of the class L/L, and the two middle ones of the class T-R/R. The first two moves are self-contained ones, and the remaining two moves are interconnected with each other with the fourth move embedded in the third one.

There are three characters acting as donors in this story: the Heavenly Emperor, the god riding a horse, and Xu the father. The young god is a helper, who transfers the hero to an immortal island, and so is the dragon, who carries the hero and his wife up to Heaven. Xu's daughter is the sought-for person, whom the hero wishes to marry.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^2 a^5 D^1 E^1 F^9 K^4$

II.  $D^1 E^1 F^1 D^7 E^7 F^{vi}$

III.  $G^3 D^6 E^6 | \text{-----} | F^9 G^2 w^0$

IV.  $a^1 D^7 E^7 W^* |$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Yang Wengbo: Hero

The young god: Helper

The Heavenly Emperor: Donor

The god riding a horse: Donor

Xu: Donor

Xu's daughter: Sought-for person

The dragon: Helper

### Tale 34. Monk Xuanzhao

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Monk Xuanzhao lives in an inaccessible mountain ( $a^6$ : lack of easy access). His devotion to Buddhism moves three dragons ( $D^1 E^1$ ) to offer to do something for him ( $F^9$ ). There is then a severe famine resulting from a serious drought ( $a^5$ ), so the monk asks them to bring rain to the dry land ( $B^1$ ). The three dragons agree, but on the precondition that the monk secures for them a promise from the Daoist hermit Sun Simiao ( $a^6$ : lack or need of the hermit's promise) to protect them from being punished by Heaven for their bringing rain without permission ( $D^7 + B^1$ ).

The monk comes to seek Sun's promise on behalf of the dragons ( $C^\uparrow$ ). Stirred by his good intention ( $D^2 E^2$ ), the hermit gives his promise without any hesitation ( $f^9$ ). The monk returns ( $\downarrow$ ) with the good news for the three dragons ( $E^7 + K^{11}$ ), who immediately bring heavy rain ( $f^1$ ) to the dried land ( $K^4$ ), and then remove the mountain standing in front of the temple, thus liquidating the lack of easy access to his temple for Monk Xuanzhao ( $K^5$ ).

This tale is composed of three moves, all falling into the class of L/L, with one move interwoven with another. Monk Xuanzhao is the hero, who has his wishes of removing the mountain and relieving the drought accomplished with the help of three dragons. The three dragons move through three different spheres of actions: as a helper, they bring the drought to an end and remove the mountain for the hero, as a dispatcher, they send the hero on a mission to seek help from the hermit, and as a donor, they put the hero to the test and reward him with rain, something of material value. Sun Simiao the hermit is a helper, whose promise to provide protection relieves the three dragons of their worries.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $a^6 D^1 E^1 F^9$  | ---- | --- | --- | ----- | --- | ---- |  $K^5$  |  
 II.  $a^5 B^1$  | --- |  $D^7$  | ----- |  $E^7$  |  $f^1 K^4$  |  
 III.  $a^6$  |  $B^1$  |  $C^{\uparrow} D^2 E^2 f^9$  |  $K^{11}$  |

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Xuanzhao: Hero

The three dragons: Donor, Helper & Dispatcher

Sun Simiao: Helper

### Tale 35. The Baby Daughter of a Vegetable Gardener

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

A scholar has come of age and is eager to get married ( $a^1$ ). He goes to a fortune-teller for advice ( $\varepsilon^1$ ), and is disappointed to learn ( $\zeta^1$ ) that he is predestined to marry a vegetable gardener's daughter ( $B^8$ ). The scholar sets out on a journey to check whether there is such a girl ( $C^{\uparrow}$ ). When he arrives at the vegetable garden, he is depressed to find that everything the fortune-teller has described appears to be true ( $\varepsilon^j \zeta^j$ ). In the absence of her parents, the scholar tricks the baby girl into coming up to him ( $\eta^1 \theta^1$ ), thrusts a needle into the crown of her head ( $A^{14}$ ), and runs away from her house ( $\downarrow$ ).

Years later, the girl's parents die ( $\beta^2$ ), leaving the girl an orphan ( $a^6$ ). The girl's misfortunes are then reported to the governor ( $B^4$ ), who takes her home (C) and adopts her as his daughter ( $K^{11}$ ). When the girl grows up, the governor marries her off to the scholar ( $W^*$ ).

Suffering from headache ( $a^6$ ), the wife complains to her husband about her illness ( $B^4$ ). The scholar takes her to see a doctor ( $C^\uparrow$ ), who roots out her sufferings by extracting out a needle from her head ( $K^5$ ).

This is a three-move tale of the class L/L. The first move is interrupted by the second one, which is itself interrupted by the third move, thus giving rise to an embedded structure interconnected with each other. The young scholar is a villain as much as a hero. He is a hero in the first move, where he feels the lack of wife and eventually has his lack liquidated, although in a most unexpected way, and he is also a villain because he commits a murderous crime against the girl in the second move, and causes sufferings to her, although he later responds to her complaint about headache and has her sufferings ended with the help of a doctor. The governor in the third move is the hero, who eliminates the girl's lack of parental care by adopting her in response to a report of her miserable situation. Morphologically speaking, the girl acts as a sought-for person in this tale despite the fact that she is the last one the scholar wishes to marry. The fortune-teller acts as a dispatcher, whose prediction results in the young scholar's departure from home in search of the girl.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $a^1 \varepsilon^j \zeta^i B^8 C^\uparrow \varepsilon^j \eta^1 \theta^{11} | \text{---} | \downarrow | \text{---} | W^* |$

II.  $A^{14} | \text{--} | \text{---} | \text{---} | a^6 B^4 C^\uparrow K^5$

III.  $\beta^2 a^1 B^4 C K^{11} |$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

The scholar: Villain & Hero

The girl: Sought-for person

The fortune-teller: Dispatcher

The governor: Hero

The doctor: Helper



## Tale 36. Wang Daoping

### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Wang Daoping swears to marry Fuyu ( $a^1$ ) before being conscripted into an expeditionary army ( $\beta^3$ ), but when he returns years later he is told ( $B^4$ ) that Fuyu has died after a forced marriage with Liu Xiang ( $a^6$ : loss/lack of life). At his request, the village people take him to the grave of Fuyu ( $G^3$ ). While he is wailing over her death ( $D^1E^1$ ), the soul of the dead girl emerges from the grave ( $F^{vi}$ ), asking Wang to open the tomb ( $D^3$ ). He does as requested ( $E^3$ ), and finds that Fuyu has come back to life ( $KF^9$ ). He carries her home with great joy ( $\downarrow$ ). Liu Xiang appeals to the court for the return of his former wife (L). The emperor adjudicates Fuyu to be Daoping's wife ( $W^*$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class L/L. Wang Daoping is the hero. His wish to marry Fuyu is finally fulfilled after he revives the girl. The soul of the dead girl is a magic helper, who helps revive Fuyu. Liu Xiang is a false hero, who marries Fuyu against her will before she dies; after she is raised from the dead, he presents an unfounded claim on her. The village people who lead the hero to the grave are helpers. The emperor also acts as a helper who realises the wish of the hero to marry Fuyu by rejecting Liu's claim.

### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

- I.  $a^1$ -----|  $LW^*$   
 II.  $\beta^3a^6B^4G^3D^1E^1F^{vi}D^3E^3KF^9\downarrow$

### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Wang Daoping: Hero

Fu Yu: Sought-for person

The soul of the dead Fuyu: Helper

Liu Xiang: False hero

The emperor: Helper

The village people: Helper

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Zhao Yan, a young man, is reaping wheat in the fields ( $\beta^3$ ) when Guan Lu, a master of magical arts, appears and asks his name ( $D^2$ ). When Zhao Yan gives his name ( $E^2$ ), he is told that he is destined to die young and that nobody has the power to change his fate ( $a^6$ ). The young man hurries home to his father with the bad news ( $B^4$ ). Zhao Yan's father runs out after Guan Lu in the hope of getting help from him ( $C^\uparrow$ ). He catches up with Guan Lu and keeps imploring him to do something to save his child ( $D^1E^1$ ) until the master of magical arts agrees to lend a helping hand ( $f^9$ ).

When he gets home ( $\downarrow$ ), he begins at once to prepare meat and wine as told ( $D^1E^1$ ). Guan Lu then comes ( $F^9$ ) to tell the lad to offer the meat and wine ( $D^7$ ) to two immortals, the Southern Dipper and the Northern Dipper, who are playing Go under a tree ( $B^2$ ). Zhao Yan goes out to the tree as instructed ( $C^\uparrow$ ) with the meat and wine his father has prepared for him ( $E^7$ ). In gratitude ( $D^1E^1$ ), the Southern Dipper prolongs his life ( $KF^9$ ). Zhao Yan runs home with the good news for his father and Guan Lu ( $\downarrow$ ).

This is a two-move tale of the class L/L in combination of the class T-R/R. The two moves are interdependent on each other with the nuclear function *lack* appearing in the first move and being eliminated towards the end of the second move. There are two heroes in this tale: Zhao Yan's father in the first move and Zhao Yan in the second one, both involving functions  $C^\uparrow$  and achieving a positive result after withstanding tests placed on them. In the second move, however, Zhao Yan's father changes into the role of a helper, who prepares the meat and wine for the hero to offer to the two immortals. Guan Lu and the Southern Dipper act as magic helpers who offer service to Zhao Yan and his father. Guan Lu is also a dispatcher, on whose suggestion Zhao Yan goes out to the fields to seek help from the two immortals.

**Function Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^3D^2E^2a^5B^4C^\uparrow D^1E^1f^9\downarrow$ -----| K |

II.  $D^1E^1F^9D^7B^2C^\uparrow E^7D^1E^1| F^9\downarrow$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Zhao Yan: Hero

Yan's father: Hero & Helper

Guan Lu: Helper & Dispatcher

The Southern Dipper: Helper

Tale 38. Wang Zizheng

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Wang Zizheng has no good teachers in his hometown to teach him ( $a^6$ ), and he takes his father's advice ( $B^2$ ) and goes to Dingzhou to study under Mr. Bian Xiao ( $C\uparrow$ ). A ghost named Li Xuanshi joins him on the way to Dingzhou ( $F^6$ ). Upon inquiry, Zizheng gives his name and his reason for going to Dingzhou ( $D^2E^2$ ). With the help of Xuanshi, Zizheng makes great progress in learning ( $KF^9$ ).

One day, Xuanshi reveals to Zizheng that his father is on trial for murder in the Court of Hell, and his life is now in great danger ( $a^6$ ). He urges Zizheng to go back ( $B^2$ ) to hold a sacrificial ceremony for him ( $D^7$ ). Zizheng hurries home ( $C\uparrow$ ), and makes sacrificial offerings to Xuanshi upon arrival ( $E^7$ ). Xuanshi appears as expected in response to his call for help ( $F^9$ ). He brings Zizheng down to the Court of Hell ( $G^3$ ) to confront a man in white who is accusing Zizheng's father of murder (L: bring an unfounded accusation). With the bow and arrow given by Li Xuanshi ( $f^1$ ), Zizheng hits the man in the eye ( $H^6$ ), and he runs away from the court in pain ( $I^6$ ). Zizheng returns home ( $\downarrow$ ) and finds in his courtyard a white rooster with the left eye injured (Ex). Zizheng has it caught and put to death (U), and soon his father recovers from his illness ( $K^4$ ).

This is a two-move tale of the class L/L. Li Xuanshi, a benevolent ghost with great supernatural powers, moves through three different spheres of action: as a magical helper, he helps Wang Zizheng the hero with his study, and transfers him between two different worlds; as a dispatcher, he urges the hero to go home to take care of his dying father; as a donor, he arms the hero with a bow and arrow. Zizheng's father is a dispatcher, who sends his son to Dingzhou to study under Mr.

Bian. The man in white is a false hero, who fabricates a charge against Zizheng's father, causes him to fall ill, and ends up being killed by the hero.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $a^6B^2C\uparrow F^6D^2E^2KF^9$

II.  $a^6B^2D^7C\uparrow E^7F^9G^3Lf^1H^6T^6\downarrow ExUK^4$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Wang Zizheng: Hero

Li Xuanshi: Helper, Dispatcher & Donor

Zizheng's Parents: Dispatcher

The white rooster: False hero

Tale 39. Tian Kunlun

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Tian Kunlun is too poor to get married ( $a^1$ ). One day, on his way to his wheat fields ( $\beta^4$ ), he sees three goddesses bathing in the pond ( $F^5$ ). He steals and hides the youngest one's feathered clothes ( $F^8$ ). With her feathered clothes taken away, the goddess cannot but go with Tian to his home ( $\downarrow$ ). She becomes Tian's wife and gives birth to a son named Tian Zhang one year later ( $W^*$ ).

Suffering from nostalgia ( $a^6$ ), the goddess tries to get her clothes back. After she promises not to abandon the family ( $D^7E^7$ ), she gets back her heavenly clothes from her mother-in-law ( $F^1$ ). She puts them on and flies back to Heaven ( $K^5+\downarrow$ ).

Tian Zhang is now left behind without maternal care ( $a^1$ ). He goes out alone to the fields ( $\beta^3$ ), crying sadly ( $B^4$ ). A man by the name of Dong Zhong hears him crying and comes to his help ( $F_9^6$ ). He tells the child to wait by the pond in the wheat fields for her mother to come down from heaven for a bath at noon ( $G^4+D^7$ ). Tian Zhang does as instructed ( $E^7$ ). Sure enough his heavenly mother makes her appearance at noon ( $F^6$ ) and with her two sisters' help, she brings her son to Heaven ( $G^1+K^5$ ).

Tian Zhang is made Prime Minister by the emperor after being sent back to the world of mortals, but he is soon dismissed from his post and exiled to a remote place due to some minor mistakes ( $a^6$ : loss of power).

While hunting in the wild fields ( $\beta^4$ ), the emperor finds two strange things unknown to people around him ( $a^6$ : lack of knowledge to identify the two things). The emperor invites people to solve the mystery ( $B^1+D^7$ ). Tian Zhang answers the emperor's call and comes to the palace ( $C\uparrow$ ). The emperor plies him with many questions ( $D^2$ ), and Tian Zhang give answers to all of them ( $E^2$ ), and also identifies the two strange objects ( $E^7+K^5$ ). The emperor is very happy and makes Tian Zhang a high-ranking official ( $f^1+K^4$ ).

This is a five-move tale of the class L/L. Of the five moves, the first three seem to be more self-contained in that each of them begins with the function of lack on the part of the hero or heroine and ends with the lack liquidated. In contrast, the last two moves are interdependent with the fifth move embedded in the fourth one.

As far as the *dramatis personae* are concerned, four characters in this tale act as Hero/Heroine, Tian Kunlun in the first move, the goddess in the second one, Tian Zhang in the rest of the moves. There are some characters involved in more than one sphere of action. For example, the goddess acts as the sought-for person in her relationship to Tian Kunlun in the first move, but plays the role of heroine in the second one. Helpers in this story are the goddess' two elder sisters, who help wit the transference of the hero to Heaven, and Dong Zhong, who shows the hero the way of meeting his goddess mother. The emperor is a dispatcher and also a donor of official position, something of material value. Tian Kunlun's mother is a donor (of the magical clothes), albeit an involuntary one.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $a^1\beta^4F^5F^8\downarrow W^*$

II.  $a^6G^4D^7E^7F^1K^5+\downarrow$

III.  $a^1\beta^3B^4F_9^6G^4+D^7E^7F^6G^1+K^5$

IV.  $a^6 | \text{----} | D^7 | \text{----} | (D^2E^2)\times 4 | E^7 | f^1+K^4$

V.  $\beta^4a^6 | B^1 | C\uparrow | \text{-----} | K^5 |$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Tian Kunlun: Hero  
 The goddess: Sought-for-person & Heroine  
 The goddess's two elder sisters: Helper  
 Tian Zhang: Hero  
 The emperor: Dispatcher, & Donor  
 Tian Kunlun's mother: Donor  
 Dong Zhong: Helper

#### Tale 40. The Magic Herb

##### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A scholar ill-treats his maidservant ( $A^{20}$ ) and forces her to run away into a mountain ( $\uparrow + a^1$ : loss of an individual). When she is running out of food ( $a^5$ ), she tries eating some herbs and finds them quite tasty ( $F^{vi}$ ). She relies on the herbs for food from then on ( $F^7$ ) and no longer feels hungry ( $K^5$ ).

Later, a servant of the scholar's discovers her hiding in the mountain ( $\varepsilon^3$ ), and reports it to his master ( $\zeta^1$ ). The scholar sends men out in pursuit of her ( $Pr^2$ ), but she runs as lightly as a bird after eating the magic herbs, and escapes from their pursuit time and again ( $Rs^1$ ). One day she is tricked into eating poisonous rice, loses her ability to fly ( $\eta^3 \theta^3$ ), and at last falls into the hands of the scholar ( $K^3$ ).

The scholar forces her to tell him the secret of the herb's magical power ( $\varepsilon^1 \zeta^1$ ), and orders her to bring some of the magic herb for him ( $a^3 B^2$ ). She leaves for the mountain ( $\uparrow$ ), but returns ( $\downarrow$ ) without bringing any magic herbs for the scholar ( $K-$ ).

This is a three-move tale of the class L/L. The maidservant is the heroine, whose lack of food is caused by the villainy committed by the scholar and eliminated by a herb with magic effects. The scholar is the villain in this story, who tortures his maidservant in the first move, and sends men to pursue her in the second move. Although his lack is temporarily liquidated in the second move, he fails to fulfil his wish to obtain the magic herbs. He is also a dispatcher, on whose order the heroine goes into the mountain to search for the magic herbs.

##### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**



I.  $A^{20} | \uparrow | a^5 F^v F^7 K^5 |$

II.  $a^1 | \text{-----} | \varepsilon^3 \zeta^1 Pr^2 Rs^1 \eta^3 \theta^3 K^3 |$

III.  $\varepsilon^1 \zeta^1 a^3 B^2 \uparrow \downarrow K -$

***Dramatis Personae:***

The scholar: Villain & Dispatcher

The Maidservant: Heroine

**Tale 41. A Scholar of Hongzhou**

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A man by the name of Cheng Youwen is sitting on a rainy day by a window, looking out down at a muddy street. He sees a child selling shoes in the street below ( $\beta^3$ ). Suddenly a young ruffian comes forward and trips him up on the muddy ground ( $A^{22}$ ). With the shoes stained with mud, he cannot sell them to buy food for his starving family ( $a^5$ ). He cries, asking for compensation ( $B^4$ ). A scholarly-looking young man comes over ( $\uparrow$ ) and gives some money to the crying boy ( $K^6$ ). The ruffian shouts abuse at the scholar in the street ( $A^{22}$ ). That night, he exercises his magic power, cuts off the hooligan's head and melts it into water (U).

This is a double-move tale with the second move embedded in the first one. The scholarly-looking young man is the hero, who liquidates the misfortune caused by the bully to the shoe-seller, and punishes him for his villainy. Besides the villain and the hero, there are two minor characters, the child selling shoes and Cheng Youwen. Although the former suffers from a lack in the first place, he is not entitled to the role of a hero because he gets his lack eliminated by doing nothing functionally significant except crying (B). For this reason, he is more a dispatcher than a hero. As far as Chen Youwen is concerned, he is not an actor but an observer, whose role in this story is therefore even more vague and insignificant in terms of morphological functions.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^3 A^{22} | \text{-----} | A^{22} U$

II.  $a^5B^4\uparrow K^5$  |

***Dramatis Personae:***

The young ruffian: Villain

The scholar: Hero

The child peddler: Dispatcher

Tale 42. Scholar Gou

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A young man named Gou comes to a temple for a visit ( $\beta^3$ ). Attracted by the beauty of a heavenly goddess on a wall painting ( $a^1$ ), he scrapes a piece off the mural, and swallows it ( $F^7$ ). After that, he leaves the temple for home ( $\downarrow$ ). At night, the heavenly girl appears in his dream and makes love to him ( $KF_9^6$ ).

Gou is found to be lost in a trance ( $a^6$ ). Claiming that Gou has been possessed by an evil spirit ( $B^4$ ), Gou's uncle, a Daoist hermit, offers to exorcise the spirit for him ( $C+D^1$ ). Gou does nothing to stop him ( $E-$ ). When he is given medicine ( $D^1$ ), he takes it ( $E-$ ). Heart-broken, the heavenly girl has to leave Gou ( $F=$ ) and soon Gou dies of illness ( $K-$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class L/L. Gou is the hero, who fulfils his wish to have a heavenly girl in the first move, but loses her and incurs a retribution in the second move due to his failure to withstand the test. The heavenly girl is a sought-for-person in her relationship to the hero. The Daoist hermit is a donor, albeit a hostile one.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^3a^1F^7\downarrow KF_9^6K$

II.  $a^6B^4CD^1E-D^1E-F=K-$

***Dramatis Personae:***

Gou: Hero

The heavenly girl: Sought-for-person

Tale 43. The Story of a Strange Fish

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

A man goes out fishing in the sea ( $\beta^4$ ) and catches a strange-looking fish, which is later discovered to be a dragon's wife ( $F^8$ ). He gives it away to a man named Jiang Qing ( $F^1$ ).

The strange fish complains that she is dying of thirst ( $*D^7$ ). Qing at once sends men to get well water for it ( $E^7$ ), but the fish says that it cannot drink well water ( $*D^7$ ). Qing then gets seawater for it ( $E^7$ ). The fish promises to reward him if it is set free ( $D^4$ ). Qing carries the fish out to the sea and releases it ( $E^4$ ). Half a year later, Qing meets with a man selling pearls at market ( $F_9^6$ ), and buys from him at a very low price a very big pearl, which is later revealed to be a reward given by the dragon's wife to him for releasing her ( $f^1$ ).

This is a single-move tale of the class T-R/R. This story does not start with a lack/loss or a misfortune, nor with a villainy, but with the function of transference of a magical agent, the fish, and then centres on the nuclear pair function D-E. Jiang Qing is the hero, who is rewarded after he undergoes and withstands a series of tests. The strange fish is a donor (of a pearl). As regards the fisherman, his role in this story may be described as a donor (of a magical agent), albeit an unwitting one. The man selling pearls is a (magic) helper, who is instructed to reward the hero with a big pearl.

**Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^4 F^8 F^1 (*D^7 E^7) \times 2 D^4 E^4 F_9^6 f^1$

***Dramatis Personae:***

The fisherman: Donor

The strange fish: Donor

The man selling pearls: Helper

Jiang Qing: Hero

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

An innkeeper and his wife leave their daughter at home to attend to some business ( $\beta^3$ ). When they come back, they find her drinking wine with three ill-bred young men, Wu and the Zhao brothers ( $\delta^1$ : for a girl to drink with men without parental permission is against social customs, hence violation of an interdiction). They give her a good scolding and a few days later, the girl dies of depression (U).

Wu comes again with his two friends to the inn to see the girl ( $\beta^3$ ) but is told that she has died ( $a^1$ ). On the way back, they run into the ghost of the girl, who invites them to her house for a drink ( $F_9^6$ ). Believing that the girl is still alive, they follow the ghost to her dwelling place ( $G^3$ ). Wu stays behind alone with the ghost girl for the night after his two friends go home ( $K^5$ ).

Wu is possessed by the ghost and falls seriously ill ( $A^{22}$ ). The Zhao brothers come to a Daoist priest surnamed Huangfu for help ( $B^4$ ). Huangfu urges them to take Wu away from the ghost to a safe place ( $B^2+D^7$ ). They carry Wu away to a place designated by the Daoist priest ( $E^7+G^2$ ). The ghost runs after Wu all the way ( $Pr^5$ ). At a critical moment, Huangfu comes to his help ( $F_9^6$ ). He gives Wu a sword ( $F^1$ ), with which Wu strikes at the ghost ( $H^6I^v$ ), and kills her (U). With the death of the ghost, Wu frees himself from her for good ( $Rs^9$ ).

Wu and the Zhao brothers are caught and imprisoned as murderers ( $a^6$ : lack of freedom). The case is reported to the prefectural governor ( $B^4$ ). He cannot decide whether the dead body found in Wu's room is that of the girl or that of her ghost (M). He has the girl's grave opened, and finds her coffin empty of a corpse, with only her clothes remaining, looking like a snake's sloughed skin (N). Only now does the governor believe Wu's story that he killed the ghost of the girl rather than the girl herself (Ex). He then gives an order to set the three men free ( $K^{10}$ ).

This is a four-move tale. The first move falls into the class of I-V/P, the second L/L, the third V/P, and the last one L/L. The four moves are chained to one another through a cause-and-effect link. The girl is the sought-for person, but the ghost of the girl is the villain. Wu is the hero who falls victim to the villain, then kills her to save

his own life. The Daoist priest Huangfu is a donor, who arms the hero with a sword, and is also a dispatcher, on whose advice the Zhao brothers transfer the hero to another place. The hero in the last move is the prefectural governor who solves the difficult task and frees the captives, thus eliminating their misfortunes.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $\beta^3 \gamma^1 \delta^1 U$

II.  $\beta^3 a^1 F_9^6 G^3 K^5$

III.  $A^{22} B^4 B^2 + D^7 E^7 + G^2 Pr^5 F_9^6 F^1 H^6 T^v URs^9$

IV.  $a^1 B^4 MNE_x K^{10}$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Wu: Hero

The girl: Sought-for person

The ghost of the girl: Villain

The Zhao brothers: Helper

Huangfu: Dispatcher & Donor

Prefectural governor: Hero

### Tale 45. Mao Lie Tried in Hell

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Chen Qi secretly mortgages all his family's farmland to Mao Lie in an attempt to take exclusive possession of them after the death of his parents ( $A^{22}$ : appropriation of common properties). Before breathing her last ( $\beta^2$ ), however, his mother decides in her final will that all the family's properties, including the farmland, be divided among her four sons ( $B^8$ ). In order to get back the title deed ( $a^6$ ), Chen goes to Mao Lie with the money in the hope of redeeming the mortgaged land ( $C^\uparrow$ ). Mao promises to give the title deed back to him in a few days ( $\eta^1$ ). Chen believes him ( $\theta^1$ ) and returns home ( $\downarrow$ ) empty handed ( $K-$ ).

Day later when Chen comes again for the title deed, Mao hides himself somewhere and refuses to see him ( $A^{22}$ : repudiation). Chen brings a lawsuit against

him at a local court ( $B^4$ ), but the judge in charge of the case has taken bribes from Mao Lie ( $A^{22}$ ), so he demands that Chen produce to the court his title deeds for the mortgaged land (M). Chen appeals to the county magistrate ( $B^1$ ), who ignores his appeal and, instead, gives him a good beating ( $A^6$ ). Finally, Chen turns to a temple god for help ( $B^1$ ). After he makes sacrificial offerings to him ( $D^1E^1$ ), the temple god appears in his dream ( $F_9^6$ ), advising him to appeal to the Lord of Mt. Tai ( $B^2$ ). He sets out on a journey to the god's temporary palace at once ( $C^\uparrow$ ). When he enters the palace, a voice coming from behind a curtain asks him to come back at night ( $D^1$ ). He does as he is told ( $E^1$ ), and leaves a bill of indictment on the table before returning home ( $\downarrow$ ).

A few days after his return, Chen dies suddenly ( $a^6$ ), as the Lord of Mt. Tai summons his soul to the nether world to confront Mao Lie at the Court of Hell ( $F^9+G^2$ ). A magical mirror is produced ( $F^3$ ), and when Mao Lie sees all the crimes he has committed against Chen clearly reflected on the magical mirror (Ex.), he pleads guilty (N). Mao Lie is put in prison in hell (U), while Chen is sent back alive to the living world ( $\downarrow K^9$ ). He gets back his title deed ( $K^5$ ), and the county magistrate is dismissed from office for his negligence (U). The house of the corrupt judge is burned down in a fire, and the judge himself is also injured seriously in the fire (U).

This is a six-move tale of a compound class with L/L in combination of V/P, and the six moves are interconnected, yielding an extremely complicated morphological scheme. Chen Qi is the hero, who loses his title deed to the villain, then loses his life, and eventually recovers the title deed and regains his life after undergoing one tribulation after another. The temple god is a dispatcher, on whose advice the hero Chen Qi leaves home to seek help from Lord of Mt. Tai. Besides Mao Lie, there are two other characters acting as villain, the corrupt judge in the third move and the county magistrate in the fourth one, both of whom are punished in the end for their villainies.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $A^{22}B^2B^8a^6C^\uparrow\eta^1\theta^1\downarrow K-$  | --- | ----- | ----- | ----- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |  $K^5$  |
- II.  $A^{22}$  | ----- | ----- | ----- | --- | --- |  $F^3Ex$  | --- | U |
- III.  $B^4A^{22}M$  | ----- | ----- | --- | --- | --- | N | --- | --- | --- | U |
- IV.  $B^1A^6$  | ----- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | U |



V. B<sup>1</sup>D<sup>1</sup>E<sup>1</sup>F<sub>9</sub><sup>6</sup>B<sup>2</sup>C<sup>↑</sup>D<sup>1</sup>E<sup>1</sup>↓|---| F<sup>9</sup>|

VI. a<sup>6</sup> | G<sup>2</sup> |-----|----|---|↓K<sup>9</sup>|

***Dramatis Personae:***

Chen Qi: Hero

Mao Lie: Villain

The county magistrate: Villain

The corrupt judge: Villain

The temple god: Dispatcher

Lord of Mt. Tai: Helper

**Tale 46: A Lad Named Zhang Enters the Netherworld**

**Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Zhang makes a living from trapping birds (A<sup>14</sup>). His wife does not bear him a son until he is very old, but the son dies before growing into adulthood (U+a<sup>1</sup>). While they are mourning the loss of their only son (B<sup>7</sup>), they hear groans coming from the grave (d<sup>7</sup>). They open the grave (E<sup>7</sup>) and find that their son has already come back to life (KF<sup>9</sup>). They get him out of the coffin and take him home with great pleasure (↓).

The boy tells his parents that when he died (a<sup>6</sup>: loss of life), his soul was summoned to the nether world to stand on trial at a court in hell (G<sup>5</sup>). After he proved himself at the court to be a filial son (D<sup>2</sup>E<sup>2</sup>), the judge released him to the world of the living to take care of his old parents (KF<sup>9</sup>↓).

A monk named Lü suffers from a running sore under one of his armpits (a<sup>6</sup>: lack of good health). The boy tells Lü that he saw his soul tortured in Hell (B<sup>8</sup>) for his lack of genuine respect for Buddhist scriptures while chanting them (D<sup>1</sup>). Frightened, the monk moves out into a clean room, and shuts himself in, chanting scriptures day and night without missing a single word (E<sup>1</sup>). Three years later, the monk is cured of the illness (KF<sup>9</sup>).

This is a three-move tale, all falling into the class L/L. There are three main characters in this story, Zhang, his son, and Monk Lü, each playing the role of hero in the move where he suffers from a kind of lack. The judge at the Court of Hell is a helper, who transfers Zhang's son between the living world and the nether world, and

raises him from the dead. Zhang's son acts as a helper in the last move, where he helps Monk Lü relieve himself of his illness by telling him the cause of his sufferings.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $A^{14}U+a^1B^7d^7E^7KF^9\downarrow$

II.  $a^6G^5D^2E^2KF^9\downarrow$

III.  $a^6B^8D^1E^1KF^9$

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Zhang: Hero

Zhang's son: Hero & Helper

Judge in hell: Helper

Monk Lü: Hero

### Tale 47. A Story of Shenyang Cave

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Li Sheng leaves his hometown for Guizhou to seek help from an official ( $\beta^7$ ). When he arrives, he finds the official already dead ( $a^5$ : homeless and helpless).

A demon kidnaps ( $A^1$ ) the daughter of a man named Qian ( $a^2$ ), who offers a reward for her return ( $B^1$ ).

Li Sheng goes out hunting in a mountain ( $\uparrow$ ). A river deer leads him to a deserted temple, where he runs into a group of demons ( $G^3$ ). He shoots their leader in the arm ( $H^6$ ), and the demon flees from the temple in panic ( $I^6$ ). Li follows the bloody tracks to a cavern ( $G^6$ ), and poisons the demons in it, killing them all ( $U$ ). He returns the cave to the rat spirits who were forcibly evicted by the demons some time ago ( $d^7E^7$ ). In gratitude, the rat spirits exercise their magic power ( $F^9$ ) to send Li Sheng together with three women kidnapped by the demon back to the human world ( $G^2$ ). Li Sheng takes the three women to a nearby village ( $\downarrow$ ), where he is greeted by Qian, who is very happy that his daughter is among the three women rescued from the monsters ( $K^{10}$ ). In gratitude, Qian marries her daughter to Li Sheng, and the other two women

are also willing to be his wife ( $W^*$ ). Li Sheng from then on lives a rich and happy life with three wives ( $K^4$ ).

This is a double-move tale of the class L/L in combination of the class V/P. Li Sheng is the hero, who kills the demons, saves Qian's daughter, and is rewarded with women and wealth. The river deer and the rat spirits are helpers for their role in leading the hero into and sending him out of the cave. Qian acts more as a helper, by marrying his daughter to the hero and helping do away with his poverty, than as a dispatcher, since the hero does not go out to the mountain ( $\uparrow$ ) as a response to Qian's call for help (B) but out of his need for survival in a homeless and friendless place. Qian's daughter is a sought-for person, albeit a fortuitous one.

### Functional Scheme of the Text:

- I.  $\beta^4 a^5$  | ----- |  $W^* K^4$   
 II.  $A^1 a^2 B^1 \uparrow G^3 H^6 I^6 G^6 U d^7 E^7 F^9 G^2 \downarrow K^{10}$  |

### *Dramatis Personae:*

Li Sheng: Hero

Qian: Helper

Qian's daughter: Sought-for person

The demons: Villain

The rat spirits: Helper

The river deer: Helper

Tale 48. The Mural

### Morphological Analysis of the Text:

Zhu and Meng Longtan wander into a monastery ( $\beta^4$ ). Infatuated with a heavenly girl depicted on a mural ( $a^1$ ), Zhu feels himself rising up to heaven and entering the scene depicted on the wall ( $G^1$ ). The heavenly girl comes out of the picture and leads him into a secret room ( $F^6$ ), and makes love to him ( $K^5$ ).

Meng, finding Zhu nowhere to be seen, turns to an old monk for help ( $a^1$ ). The monk exercises his magic power ( $F^9$ ) to get Zhu out of the illusory world ( $G^7$ ) back to his friend ( $K^5$ ).

This is a two-move tale, of the class L/L. Zhu acts as the hero. His lust for the heavenly girl on a wall picture is realised in the unreal world conjured up by an old monk. Meng is also a hero in that he loses his friend and gets him back through the monk. The monk is a magic helper, who transfers Zhu between the real world and the illusory one.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^4 a^1 G^1 F^6 K^5$

II.  $a^1 F^9 G^7 K^5$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Zhu: Hero

The heavenly girl: Sought-for person

The old monk: Helper

Meng Longtan: Helper

#### **Tale 49. The Taoist of Mount Lao**

#### **Morphological Analysis of the Text:**

Out of admiration for Daoist arts ( $a^3$ ), Wang leaves home for Mount Lao ( $\uparrow$ ). A Daoist master doubts whether he can bear the hard life in the mountain ( $D^2$ ). Wang vows that he fears no hardship ( $E^2$ ). The master tests Wang by assigning him to gather firewood for the monastery ( $D^1$ ). Wang does as he is told ( $E^1$ ). Many days pass by, but the master shows no intention of teaching him any magical arts ( $D^1$ ). Wang now finds life as a Daoist practitioner in the mountain more and more unbearable, so he asks for leave to return home ( $E-$ ). At his request, the master teaches Wang the magic art of going through walls in return for the wood he has gathered for the monastery ( $KF^9$ ), but warns him not to abuse and show off the magical art ( $\gamma^1$ ). Wang returns home ( $\downarrow$ ). He brags about his magical skill and cannot

wait any longer to show it off in the presence of his wife ( $\delta^1$ ), but ends up with a big bump left on the forehead because the magic art does not work any longer (U).

This is a two-move tale of the class L/L in combination of I-V/P. Wang is the hero. He fulfils his wish to learn a Daoist trick after undergoing a series of tests, and in the second move he is punished for his violation of the interdiction set to him by a Daoist master. The Daoist master is the donor who puts Wang to the test and imparts to Wang the magic skill of going through walls.

#### Functional Scheme of the Text:

I.  $a^3\uparrow D^2E^2D^1E^1D^1E-KF^1$

II.  $\gamma^1\downarrow\delta^1U$

#### *Dramatis Personae:*

Wang: Hero

The Daoist master: Donor

#### Tale 50. Fox-Fairy Jiaona

#### Morphological Analysis of the Text

Kong Xueli leaves his hometown to visit a friend ( $\beta^4$ ) only to find that his friend has already died ( $a^5$ ). A gentleman by the name of Huangfu appears and invites him to live with his family ( $F_9^6$ ). Kong is very happy to move into his house ( $K^6$ ).

Kong is suddenly struck down by a serious malady ( $a^6$ ). Huangfu sends for his younger sister Jiaona ( $B^1$ ), who comes to his rescue ( $C\uparrow$ ). With a red lozenge ( $F^3$ ) she relieves him of the affliction ( $K^5$ ).

Carried away with the beauty of Jiaona ( $a^1$ ), Kong cites a poem, expressing his admiration for her ( $B^8$ ). Huangfu, however, offers to marry to Kong his cousin named Asong who is as beautiful as Jiaona ( $F^9$ ). Kong is happy to marry A Song ( $W^*$ ).

His family being in imminent danger of extinction ( $a^6$ ), Huangfu comes to Kong with the bad news and asks him for help ( $B^4$ ). Kong agrees to do whatever he can to save his family from the disaster ( $D^1E^1$ ). Huangfu then gives him a sword ( $F^1$ ). Kong

goes out with the sword ( $C^{\uparrow}$ ) and then a fight takes place between Kong and a monster ( $H^1$ ). Kong strikes down the monster to the ground with the sword ( $I^v$ ). Huangfu's family are thus saved ( $K^5$ ), but Kong is struck dead by a thunderbolt while fighting the monster ( $a^6$ : lack /loss of life). Jiaona puts her red pill into his mouth, and brings him back to life again ( $KF^7$ ).

This is a five-move tale of class L/L. The five moves in this story are quite self-contained in itself, each starting with a kind of lack and ending with the lack liquidated. This story revolves mainly around Kong Xueli the hero, who encounters various misfortunes and finally has them eliminated one by one. Another major character is Jiaona, whose role in the tale is far from being confined to that of donor. She is a heroine in the full morphological sense in the second move, where she answers the call for help and eliminates the misfortune using magical medicine. Huangfu is also a very active character, who is a helper in the first and third moves, a dispatcher in the second and the fourth ones, and also a donor in the fourth one. Although Kong first falls in love with Jiaona, the sought-for person in this story should be Asong in that her marriage with Kong eliminates the hero's lack of a bride.

#### **Functional Scheme of the Text:**

I.  $\beta^3 a^5 F_9^6 K^6$

II.  $a^6 B^1 C^{\uparrow} F^3 K^5$

III.  $a^1 B^4 F^9 W^* G^{\downarrow}$

IV.  $a^6 B^4 D^1 C^{\uparrow} E^1 F^1 H^1 I^v K^5$

V.  $a^6 KF^7$

#### ***Dramatis Personae:***

Kong Xueli: Hero

Huangfu: Helper, Dispatcher & Donor

Jiaona: Heroine & Donor

Asong: Sought-for person





## Chapter Eight: Data Analysis and Conclusion

In the previous chapter, we have conducted a morphological analysis of fifty classical Chinese *zhiguai* tale texts. This chapter will be devoted to description and discussion of tale functions, tale moves and tale roles based on tabulated data generated from the text analysis. Finally a conclusion is attempted of morphological features and structural patterns of classical Chinese supernatural fiction.

### Section 1: Tale functions in classical Chinese supernatural fiction

- Functions and Moves: *zhiguai* tales at a glance

Propp (1968: 21) treats function "as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action." Although the variety and number of characters appearing in the *zhiguai* tale texts analysed can be very large, their sphere(s) of action are mostly confined to a very limited area of functions. Propp extracts some 31 functions in the one hundred Russian fairy tales. He notices that it is far from being the case that all of them would appear in one and the same tale. This is also true of *zhiguai* fiction. In the fifty Chinese tale texts analysed, none of them contains all the 31 Proppian functions, and what is more, their frequency of appearance in tale texts varies greatly from one to the other, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Frequency of Appearance of Propp's 31 Functions in the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale Texts

Function Sequence	Function Symbols	Total No. of Appearances	Highest No. of Appearances in a Single Tale	Function Sequence	Function Symbols	Total No. of Appearances	Highest No. of Appearances in a Single Tale
1	$\beta$	29	3	16	H	13	1
2	$\chi$	9	1	17	J	1	1
3	$\delta$	10	1	18	I	14	1
4	$\varepsilon$	14	3	19	K	71	4
5	$\zeta$	15	3	20	↓	30	2
6	$\eta$	16	6	21	Pr.	4	1
7	$\theta$	16	6	22	Rs	4	1
8	A	37	4	23	O	1	1
8 a	a	77	5	24	L	5	1
9	B	49	5	25	M	6	2

10	C	26	3	26	N	6	2
11	↑	46	3	27	Q	1	1
12	D	70	6	28	Ex.	9	2
13	E	70	6	29	T	4	1
14	F	105	6	30	U	33	3
15	G	23	3	31	W	17	2

As can be seen from the above table, function F occurs most frequently with its total number of appearance amounting to as many as 105. In sharp contrast are functions J, O, and Q, each of which occurs only once in the data of our corpus.

As is the case with the appearance of functions in the data, the tale texts also differ greatly from each other in terms of the number of functions and moves contained, as illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2. Ratio of Number of Moves to Number of Functions in Each of the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale Texts<sup>1</sup>

Tale No.	No. of Functions	No. of Moves	Length of Text	Tale No.	No. of Functions	No. of Moves	Length of Text
1	7	2	119	26	15	2	486
2	7	2	73	27	9	2	247
3	4	1	317	28	22	3	1,137
4	10	1	543	29	25	2	960
5	12	2	320	30	22	2	1,039
6	8	1	379	31	16	2	629
7	16	2	404	32	17	3	1,342
8	14	3	495	33	22	4	399
9	12	2	426	34	20	3	1,175
10	20	4	512	35	23	3	663
11	7	1	300	36	15	2	636
12	24	3	969	37	24	2	758
13	15	3	728	38	25	2	2,204
14	8	2	360	39	42	5	2,469
15	13	4	600	40	21	3	524
16	17	3	333	41	8	2	479
17	11	1	692	42	16	2	504
18	17	2	696	43	11	1	960
19	17	3	733	44	28	4	1,180
20	15	1	388	45	38	6	1,359
21	19	3	568	46	22	3	626
22	13	2	431	47	19	2	2,047
23	15	1	449	48	9	2	1,112
24	18	3	729	49	14	2	1,352
25	7	1	720	50	29	5	3,571

<sup>1</sup> Text length is measured in terms of number of Chinese characters contained in a tale text.

If taken as a whole, the fifty tale texts have an average length of 800 Chinese characters, and contain around 17 functions distributed among approximately 2.5 moves per tale text. Propp (1968) does not provide statistics for the average length of the Russian fairy tale texts or the average number of functions per tale text in the Russian material analysed, nor does he give the minimum number of functions required of a morphologically complete fairy tale. When we look at the above table, we find that the smallest number of functions needed to form a complete Chinese *zhiguai* tale is only four, as shown in Tale 3. Morphologically speaking, a tale is complete if it experiences a development from a villainous act or a state of insufficiency in the beginning through intermediary functions to functions used in the capacity of the *dénouement*. It is in this sense that Tale 3 is a complete and self-contained one.

The number of functions in a tale text is determined to a large extent by the course of actions characters are involved in, as is the number of tale roles and moves contained in the text. While the number of functions is in general in direct proportion to the number of tale roles and moves, it is not necessarily the case that a longer text will have more functions and contain more moves than a shorter one. In our corpus, Tale 33 has a length of no more than 400 words but contains 22 functions distributed among 7 characters in 4 moves, while Tale 32, with a length of over 3 times that of Tale 33, contains only 17 functions distributed among 4 *dramatis personae* in 3 moves. If we compare Tale 2 and Tale 38, we will find an even sharper contrast: the former, being a text of only 73 words, consists of two moves, as many as in Tale 38, which, however, has a text more than 30 times as long.

A chronological study of the fifty tales reveals that the average number of functions and moves per tale text increases respectively from 8 to 21, and from 1.5 to 2.9, as shown in Table 3. It is worth noting that the difference between Group 3 and 4 in terms of the average number of functions and moves per tale text is too small to be significant, compared with their difference from the first two groups. This seems to suggest a slow yet steady development in classical Chinese tales of the supernatural and strange after the genre grew into maturity around the Tang dynasty. This quantitatively morphological change tallies well with *zhiguai*'s history of development through the dynasties:

Table 3: Number of Functions/ Moves and Their Distributions in the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tales

Tale Group	1	2	3	4	Total No. of Tales	50
Total No. of Tales in Each Group	6	19	14	11		
Total No. of Functions in Each Group	48	278	296	216	Total No. of Functions in 50 Tales	837
Total No. of Moves in Each Group	9	45	37	32	Total No. of Moves in 50 Tales	123
No. of Functions per Tale in Each Group	8	≈ 15	21	≈ 20	No. of Functions per Tale Text in 50 Tales	≈ 17
No. of Moves per Tale in Each Group	1.5	2.4	2.6	2.9	No. of Moves per Tale Text in 50 Tales	≈ 2.5
No. of Functions per Move in Each Group	5.3	6.2	8	≈ 6.8	No. of Functions per Move in 50 Tales	6.8

The earliest *zhiguai* tales were rather insubstantial, but with the passage of time, they gradually matured, and grew into morphologically fully-fledged stories during the Tang and the Song dynasties. After the Song, they came to a standstill and did not display further development in morphological construction until the Qing when classical Chinese tales of the supernatural and strange reached a climax with the appearance of Pu Songling's *LZZY*. *LZZY* represents the highest level achieved by Chinese *zhiguai* literature, but it does not necessarily follow that all the stories contained in it are well-developed and sophisticated ones. In fact, *LZZY*, on the whole, is a *zhiguai* work of heterogeneous quality, as evidenced from my morphological analysis of three magic tales from *LZZY*, in which one can find not only complex stories such as Tale 50 consisting of 5 moves and 29 functions, but also those like Tale 48 containing only 9 functions distributed in 2 moves, which are well below the average number of functions and moves per tale text, as shown in Table 3.

- Sequence of functions

Propp (1968: 22) claims that the sequence of functions is always identical in the fairytale. None of the functional schemes of the fifty *zhiguai* tale texts, however, is found entirely in agreement with Propp's law of the fixed order of functions unless the

two “escape clauses” are applied to the Chinese corpus. In spite of these variations and deviations, the Chinese material does show certain regularity to the ways in which the sequence of functions are disrupted, and it is this regularity which distinguishes *zhiguai* as a unique genre of Chinese narratives and differentiates it from the Russian fairytale.

Of the functional schemes of the fifty tale texts, the closest to Propp’s law of fixed order are Tales 4, 7, and 11, as shown below:

Ex. 1: Tale 4

I.  $a^6 B^1 C D^1 E^1 \uparrow D^1 E^1 F^9 K^5$

Ex. 2: Tale 11

I.  $\beta^2 a^5 + D^1 E^1 \uparrow F^6 K^6$

Ex. 3: Tale 17

I.  $A^{14} A^{17} + B^4 C f^1 \uparrow H^6 T^v U \downarrow^{**} W$

Since most of the tales in our corpus exhibit certain deviations or variations in one way or another, we shall therefore give most of our attention to these features. A comparative analysis of the research material shows that the deviations of Chinese *zhiguai* tales from Russian fairy tales are mostly manifested in the precedence of the complication functions numbered 8-11 ( $A/a BC \uparrow$ ) and donor/helper functions numbered 12-14 ( $DEF$ ) over preparatory functions numbered 2-7 ( $\gamma \delta \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta$ ). A typical example of this is function  $\gamma$ . Of its ten occurrences in the research material, in seven, it is preceded by either the connective function B (in Tale 5, 10, and 16), or donor functions D, E, and/or F (in Tale 29, and 31), as illustrated below:

Ex. 4: Tale 10.

I.  $\beta^1 a^1 | \text{-----} | C \uparrow \downarrow + K^5 |$

II.  $B^1 + \gamma^3 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | \delta^3 | \text{---} | U |$

III.  $a^1 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | K^{ix} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | T^5 + {}^0 w |$



$$\text{IV. } \varepsilon^1 \zeta^1 A^{14} | \text{---} | \text{----} | \text{--} | \text{Pr}^2 \text{Rs}^6 | \text{-----} - | \text{U}$$

Ex. 5: Tale 29.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } a^1 D^2 E^2 F^9 D^1 E^1 F^9 G^3 D^1 F^1 \downarrow E^1 F^{vi} G^1 | \text{-----} | \text{K-} \\ \text{II. } D^1 E^1 \gamma^1 + D^7 D^2 E^2 \delta^1 + E - F = \downarrow | \end{array}$$

This habitual transposition of the function  $\gamma$  from the preparatory section to plot complication section, and the significant changes this transposition causes to the course of actions in a Chinese *zhiguai* tale lead us to give  $\gamma$  equal morphological weight with  $A/a$  in tale classification.<sup>2</sup>

Such dislocation in the sequential order of functions also happens to functions numbered 4-5 ( $\varepsilon \zeta$ ) and functions numbered 6-7 ( $\eta \theta$ ), although not on so large a scale as function  $\gamma$ . Examples of the former case can be found in Tale 18, 21, 28, 30, and 35, and those of the latter case in Tale 28, 40, and 45. Unlike function  $\gamma$ , they serve more as intermediary functions like DEF in non-T-R/R-class tales<sup>3</sup> than as plot complication ones like  $A/a$ , which causes a crisis in a tale and calls for an immediate solution.

It is worth noting that in the tale with moves belonging to the class T-R/R, functions DEF tend to occupy the initial position of the sequence of functions, or occur immediately after function  $\beta$ , as shown in Tale 12, 14, 15, 33, and 37. The reason for this is perhaps that a move of the class T-R/R is usually devoid of function  $A/a$ , and the whole story is therefore centred around the axis at which the hero is put to the test (D) and, after withstanding the test (E), is rewarded with a magical agent or a helper (F), thus leaving no room in the move for the so-called "preparatory functions"  $\gamma \delta \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta$ , the function of which is mainly limited to the preparation for the appearance of the villain and/or the hero in tales of the class L/L or V/P. It is also true of I-V/P-class tales, in which function  $\gamma$  tends to occur before other functions.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed account of the change brought about by the dislocation of function  $\gamma$  to the course of actions in a story will be made later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> A classification of *zhiguai* tales will be conducted in Section 2 of this Chapter.

- Functions occurring in pairs

As Propp (1968: 64) observes that “one function develops out of another with logical and artistic necessity,” the sequence of functions is primarily determined by a logical relationship between functions, namely, between each and every event unfolded as a course of actions in a tale. Logical relationships in Propp’s 31 functions can be roughly categorised into two major types: chronological and cause-and-effect. In fairy tales, functions are arranged logically and chronologically in a linear sequence in line with the development of events and movement of characters through time and space in a tale. The logical and chronological relations between functions are well manifest through the correspondence of forms of one function with forms of another, which gives rise to what Propp (1968: 27) terms “the paired element”.

As can be seen from Table 4, there exists a chronological relation between two members of the listed function pairs except for  $\delta$ -U, E-F, A-U, and J-Q. The relationship of  $\delta$  to U, E to F, A to U, and J to Q seems to be more of a cause-and-effect nature than a chronological one.

Table 4: Function Pairs

Function No.	1 <sup>st</sup> Half of the Pair	→	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of the Pair
2-3	$\gamma$ (interdiction)	→	$\delta$ (violation)
3-30	$\delta$ (violation)	→	U (punishment)
4-5	$\varepsilon$ (reconnaissance)	→	$\zeta$ (delivery)
6-7	$\eta$ (trickery)	→	$\theta$ (complicity)
8-8a	A (villainy)	→	a (misfortune/lack)
8-30	A (villainy)	→	U (punishment)
8a-19	a (misfortune/lack)	→	K (liquidation)/W (marriage)
9-10	B (mediation) counteraction)	→	C (beginning
11-12	$\uparrow$ (departure)	→	$\downarrow$ (return)
12-13	D (test)	→	E (reaction)
13-14	E (reaction) magical agent)	→	F (provision/receipt of a
16-18	H (struggle)	→	I (victory)
17-27	J (branding)	→	Q (recognition)
21-22	Pr (pursuit)	→	Rs (rescue)
24-28	L (unfounded claim)	→	Ex (exposure)
25-26	M (difficult task)	→	N (resolution)

Among the 31 functions, there are some that seem to exist in isolation without any discernible relations with any other functions. Propp (1968: 65) refers to them as "individual functions", but he stops short of making further analysis except that he mentions functions  $\beta$  (absentation), U (punishment) and W (marriage) as examples for his individual functions. In our view, however, function U is not an "individual" function but a "relational" one as it occurs logically as a result of function  $\delta$  or A. So is function W, which usually occurs together with function  $a$  in Chinese *zhiguai* tales in case the lack a hero feels is that of an individual, or more precisely, a bride. Left as purely "individual functions" are thus  $\beta$  (absentation), G (spatial transference between two kingdoms; guidance), o (unrecognised arrival) and T (transfiguration).

It is worth noting that although the 31 functions are classified into the three groups in terms of presence or absence of logical (cause-and-effect and/or chronological) relations, this classification is not yet a clear-cut one. Let us take function  $\beta$  for example. It seems that no one can deny the existence of a kind of chronological relation of this function with the remaining thirty functions if a morphologically significant action takes place after the departure of a family member in a tale. Nevertheless, this kind of relation is rather vague and loose in that the departure of a family member will not entail a chain of actions or reactions in most cases. In other words, the occurrence of function  $\beta$  does not necessarily require the occurrence of any other function in one and the same tale, nor do functions G, o, and T. Nevertheless, when a character departs from home regardless of objections or warnings expressed by another character, his departure should be treated at the same time as the violation of an interdiction if his action effects a villainy, causes a misfortune/lack, or provokes a punishment. A double morphological meaning of function  $\beta$  thus arises.

Another variation from the above classification occurs when one function corresponds with two different functions and accordingly forms two different relations with each of them. A case in point is function  $a$ , which has a cause-and-effect relationship with function A, but a chronological relationship with function K. Such is also the case with function E, the relationship of which with function D or F is respectively chronological and cause-and-effect.

- Co-occurrence of function pairs

As mentioned above, functions appear in pairs when the occurrence of one function requires the occurrence of another out of logical necessity. However, there are also instances in which the second half of a function pair fails to co-occur with the first half, as noticed in Propp (1968: 27; 29). In such cases, the first half of the pair is usually implied or simply understood.

It can be seen from Table 5 attached below that, of the sixteen paired functions, five ( $\eta$ - $\theta$ , D-E, J-Q, Pr-Rs, and M-N) have the number of occurrences of the first half of the pair being equal to that of the second half. Of the remaining eleven function pairs, seven ( $\gamma$ - $\delta$ ,  $\varepsilon$ - $\zeta$ ,  $\delta$ -U, A-a, E-F, H-I, and L-Ex.) have the second half of the pair occurring more often than the first one, and four (a-K, A-U, B-C, and  $\uparrow$ - $\downarrow$ ) have the first half more often than the second one.

Table 5. Function Pairs and Their Occurrence in the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale Texts

Function Symbols	Total No. of Appearances	Function Symbols	Total No. of Appearances	Difference <sup>4</sup>
$\gamma$	9	$\delta$	10	1
$\delta$	10	U	33	23
$\varepsilon$	14	$\zeta$	15	1
$\eta$	16	$\theta$	16	0
A	37	U	33	4
A	37	a	77	40
a	77	K	71	6
B	49	C	26	23
$\uparrow$	46	$\downarrow$	30	16
D	70	E	70	0
E	70	F	105	35
H	13	I	14	1
J	1	Q	1	0
Pr.	4	Rs.	4	0
M	6	N	6	0
L	5	Ex	9	4

In the data of our corpus, there are a few instances in which the first member of a function pair is absent from the text but present in the context. In Tale 18, the hero Xie

<sup>4</sup> The word "difference" is used in this table to refer to the situation in which a function pair fails to co-occur in one and the same tale text.

Duan persists in reconnaissance of the goddess ( $\varepsilon$ ), and eventually obtains information about her real identity and secret mission in the world of mortals ( $\zeta$ ), but at the same time, violates, although unintentionally, the then -widely held belief ( $\delta$ ) that "Heaven's design must not be revealed to mortal's ears" (*tianji bu ke xielou* 天機不可泄漏).

In the case of paired functions  $\varepsilon$ - $\zeta$ , function  $\zeta$  does not co-occur with function  $\varepsilon$  in Tale 13 simply because the king of Chu, the villain, dreams of the hero plotting for revenge ( $\zeta$ ) rather than make any effort to reconnoitre about the hero ( $\varepsilon$ ). Functions H-I appear in pairs every time in our research material except in Tale 13, where the first half of the pair is absent from the tale because the villain is killed ( $I^5$ ) without a fight (H).

However, the first half of a function pair is not always implied or understood simply due to the existence of the second half. In the case of function pair E-F, there is a huge difference in the number of occurrences between the two members of the pair, and the absence of the first half E cannot be simply explained as implied or understood.<sup>5</sup> So is the case with function pair A-a, the second half of which enjoys a much higher frequency of appearance in our data than the first half of the pair. A villainy (A) sometimes can give rise to misfortunes/lacks, as shown in Tale 7, 9, 15, 40, 41, 45, 46, and 47, but it is not always the case with Chinese *zhiguai* tales. Quite often we have stories in which the hero is initially situated in a state of lack with a cause arising from *within* rather than from *without*. These phenomena, which occur mostly with tales of the class L/L about romantic encounters of men with goddesses or fairies, lead us to believe that function a is paired to function A only when the latter constitutes a direct and immediate cause for the former in a tale.

As far as function pair  $\delta$ -U is concerned, the first half of the pair has a rather lower frequency of occurrence in the data than the second one. It is not that function  $\delta$  is implied or understood but that function U more often than not comes along as a result of a villainy (A). As a matter of fact, function U resulting from villainies accounts for more than 80% of the cases where a character is punished in our corpus. Even in cases where the violation of the interdiction provokes a punishment, the punishment sometimes

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<sup>5</sup> The reason for this will be discussed in detail later in this section.

comes in the form of loss of an object/person obtained previously as a negative result of function K, which is conventionally designated as K-, as shown in Tale 8, 18, and 29.

Of the 31 functions, L and Ex are the only two ones associated with the character termed "false hero". According to Propp (1968: 60-61), function L occurs when a false hero presents an unfounded claim and then with the exposure of the false hero comes along function Ex. In the corpus of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction, function Ex appears in eight tale texts, a total of nine times, of which on four occasions it occurs in pairs with L, as seen in Tale 21, 32, and 38, and the second move of Tale 20, while on five other occasions, it occurs without L, as seen in Tale 7, 16, 44, 45, and the first move of Tale 20. In the latter case, the function of exposure (Ex) occurs when a character, who acts as a villain rather than a false hero because he does not commit the act of making an unfounded claim, reveals by accident or is forced to reveal his real self as a criminal, a monster, a devil or an animal spirit. There is only one case in our research data, in which L, the first half of the pair, occurs without the second half Ex. It happens, as evidenced in Tale 36, when the villain presents an unfounded claim under no assumed name or appearance, thus leaving function Ex out of place.

As shown in Table 5, there are four function pairs in which the first half of the pair occurs more often than the second, and this accounts for a difference in the number of occurrences between two members of the pairs. In the case of *a*-K, on the surface, they seem to correspond closely with each other with a difference of only six in the number of occurrences. A comparative study of the morphological schemes containing functions *a* and K reveals that things are not this simple. Generally speaking, where there occurs function *a*, there will be function K to accompany it. However, if the lack the hero feels is that of a wife, it is most probably function W numbered 31 that appears in correspondence with function *a*, as is the case with Tale 8, 21, 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 39, and 50, where function *a* is paired with function W rather than with function K.

In most cases, function *a* is of a one-to-one corresponding relation with K or W. Deviations from this one-to-one correspondence are also found in our data. In Tale 14, two characters attempt to liquidate a lack, and one succeeds but the other fails, hence one *a* corresponding with two different results (positive and negative) of function K. In



Tale 18, the hero obtains a magical helper in the first move but loses her in the second one due to his violation of an interdiction, thus also giving rise to the two different results of function K. On the other hand, in Tale 26, the second half of the pair occurs without the first half just because there is no information nor evidence provided in the story for us to infer whether or not the hero feels a lack, or what this lack might be.

Unlike the relation between paired functions A-a, paired functions A-U seem to condition each other for their existence in a tale. Nevertheless, there is still a difference of four in the number of their occurrences. Although a villainous act generally leads to the punishment of the villain, the villain is occasionally left unpunished for no good reason. In such cases, a villainous act (A) usually acts more as a preparatory function to pave the way for the hero coming into the story rather than as a plot complication one. Examples of this are Tales 15 and 40, where the plot does not centre on the conflict between heroes and villains but develops in a direction other than that seen in a V/P-class tale.

As regards the paired functions B-C, there is a great difference in the number of occurrences between them, and the difference, as shown in the corpus of Chinese *zhiguai* tales, is so big that one cannot help doubting whether or not they are "paired elements" in Proppian terms. This difference in the number of occurrences, in our view, is a natural reflection of the difference exhibited between Chinese *zhiguai* tales and Russian fairy tales in plot arrangement concerning heroes. Propp (1968: 36) divides heroes into two types: seeker-heroes and victimised heroes. As is often the case with Chinese *zhiguai* fiction, heroes are themselves victims who suffer from misfortunes or lacks, and therefore are self-motivated to seek liquidation or revenge without the need to be requested or ordered. Moreover, even in the case of a seeker-hero in a Chinese *zhiguai* tale, when a misfortune/lack occurs, the hero is usually sent in or out to eliminate it without being consulted as to whether he is willing or not.

As to function pair  $\uparrow\downarrow$ , quite often in Chinese *zhiguai* fiction a story ends without mentioning whether the hero returns or not, which accounts for the frequent absence of the second half  $\downarrow$  from stories.

A comprehensive analysis of the paired functions shows some regularity in the occurrence of member functions in Chinese *zhiguai* tales. There are two points meriting special attention. First, of the sixteen function pairs, member functions in a nuclear function pair basically occur in correspondence with each other. Where there arises a difference in the number of occurrence between nuclear paired functions, there is usually a discernible reason peculiar to Chinese *zhiguai* fiction for the absence of one member of the pair. These reasons, when taken as a whole, constitute some distinctive features of classical Chinese supernatural fiction. The second point, which is concerned with the logical sequence of functions, is that no reverse order of appearance has been found between the two members of function pairs in the data of our corpus, which is one of the most important qualities classical Chinese tales of the supernatural and strange share with Russian fairy tales.

- Deviations regularly arising from *zhiguai* tales in the distribution of functions

As revealed in Appendix V, many of the Chinese *zhiguai* tale texts investigated deviate in one way or another from Propp's law of fixed order of functions. The most common variations displayed in our research material are as follows:

1.  $\gamma$ (interdiction)- $\delta$ (violation of the interdiction)

Propp (1968: 26-28) categorises function pair  $\gamma$ - $\delta$  as preparatory functions, and their role, like that of the other five preliminary functions, is thus defined as providing settings for stories and preparing for the appearance of main characters, heroes or villains. The absence or presence of these two functions does not greatly affect the main course of actions in a story.

A comparative study of the paired functions, however, shows that the role they play in Chinese *zhiguai* tales is far beyond that in Russian fairy tales as observed by Propp. The second member of this function pair in Chinese *zhiguai* tales often constitutes a nuclear paired function with function U or with the negative result of function K, and

therefore plays a key role in determining the course of actions within a move, as shown below:

Ex. 6: Tale 5.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } F^5 F^1 | \text{-----} | a^6 D^{11} E^{11} K^3 F^1 \\ \text{II. } | B^4 \gamma^1 \delta^1 U | \end{array}$$

Ex. 7: Tale 16.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } \beta^3 A^{20} B^4 | \text{-----} | \text{----} | A^{12} F^6 E x H^6 I^6 U | \\ \text{II. } B^2 + \gamma^2 C \uparrow \delta^1 U | \\ \text{III. } A^{14} | \text{-----} | U \end{array}$$

Ex. 8: Tale 18.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } \beta^2 a^1 D^1 E^1 F^5 F^9 (\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ji}) \times 2 \varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ji} | F^1 | \text{----} | K^6 W^* \\ \text{II. } \delta^1 | \text{---} | K - | \end{array}$$

2. A (villainy)/a (lack)-DEF (test-reaction-receipt of magical agent)

In the Russian fairytales, villainous acts often cause misfortunes or lacks, which are usually liquidated by the hero with the assistance of a magical helper or through the use of a magical object, thus giving rise to a chain of actions represented as A/a-DEF. In the course of obtaining a magical agent, the hero customarily undergoes a series of tests and is then rewarded with a magical agent after he withstands the test(s).

Chinese *zhiguai* tales, however, tend to have magical agents appear of their own accord or just offer service to the hero without putting the hero to the test, as demonstrated in the following examples.

Ex. 9: Tale 2.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } a^6 \uparrow F^{10} \text{-----} | F^9 K^{11} \\ \text{II. } a^6 K_9 | \end{array}$$

Ex. 10: Tale 8.

$$\text{I. } a^1 F_9^6 | \text{---} | W^* |$$

$$\text{II. } \gamma^1 | \text{-----} | \delta^1 K - f^1 J^3 |$$

$$\text{III. } a^5 D^2 E^2 F^{vi} Q W^0$$

Ex.11: Tale 48.

$$\text{I. } \beta^4 a^1 G^1 F_9^6 K^5$$

$$\text{II. } a^1 F^9 G^7 K^5$$

The persistent appearance of F without D and/or E in our corpus shows a morphologically significant deviation of Chinese *zhiguai* tales from Russian fairy tales. In the Russian fairy tales, the magical agents are usually goblins, fairies, spirits, while in Chinese *zhiguai* tales, magical agents are more often than not gods or immortals of great power and high virtue. Omnipotent and omniscient, they live high above the mortal world. They usually help the needy, reward the good and punish the evil of their own accord with no need or intention of being personally involved in worldly affairs, which account for most of the cases where function F occurs without the first half of the pair E.

### 3. E (reaction)-F (receipt of a magical agent)

As mentioned previously, Propp concludes (1968: 92) from his investigation into Russian fairy tales that tales usually begin with a villainous act or a state of lack, and develop towards a solution to a crisis through some intermediary functions. This is, however, far from true in respect of the Chinese *zhiguai* tales. As exemplified in Tale 12, 26, and 33, it is not unusual for a *zhiguai* tale to go without function A or *a*. In such cases, the story most probably has its focus fixed on the "intermediary functions" D and E, and revolves to an end with a terminal function (F, K, W, etc.).

Ex. 12: Tale 12.

$$\text{I. } \beta^4 F^6 G^3 B^1 + D^7 C \uparrow F_{vi} E^7 G^3 f^1$$

$$\text{II. } D^7 F^{vi} G^3 E^7 F^9 \downarrow$$

$$\text{III. } A^{22}+a^1\uparrow B^4U\downarrow K^9$$

Ex. 13: Tale 26.

$$\text{I. } \beta^4 D^1 E^1 f^1 \downarrow K^6 W^*$$

$$\text{II. } \beta^4 D^1 E-F=Pr^8 Rs^8 K-\downarrow$$

Ex. 14: Tale 33.

$$\text{I. } \beta^2 a^5 D^1 E^1 F^9 K^4$$

$$\text{II. } D^1 E^1 F^1 D^7 E^7 F^{vi}$$

$$\text{III. } G^3 D^6 E^6 \text{-----} | F^9 G^2 w^0$$

$$\text{IV. } a^1 D^7 E^7 W^* |$$

Moves with function group DEF occurring independently from function A/a are thus classified as T-R/R, a category which seems to be absent from the Russian fairy tales.<sup>6</sup>

## Section 2: Tale moves in classical Chinese supernatural fiction

### • Move classification

The concept of "move" is proposed by Propp (1968: 92) to describe the course of a tale developing from function A/a to any one of the terminal functions through intermediary functions, but this definition fails to make clear the relationship between moves and functions, and between moves and tales, which has been evidenced by the confusion shown in the functional scheme Propp (1968: 129-130) presents of a double-move Russian fairytale. Besides, not all Chinese tales in the data of our corpus start with and centre around function A/a, which makes Propp's definition of move even more unworkable. Based on our observation of the Chinese material, the move has been redefined as a structural unit consisting of functions with the course of actions revolving

<sup>6</sup> The situation in which function group DEF alone constitutes a move is not peculiar to Chinese *zhiguai* fiction. Xavier Durand (1977) comes up with the same observation based on an extensive morphological analysis of Genesis 32.23-33 using a Proppian model. For more about Durand's analysis, see Milne (1988: 135-141).

around one of the four nuclear paired functions ( $\delta$ -U, A-U,  $a$ -K/W, and E-F/K). A tale may have only one move in it, and can also contain two or more moves which are interrelated with each other by *dramatis personae*, and/or the functions they perform in the tale.

Tale moves so defined are accordingly classified into four major types or classes by the dominant presence of one of the four nuclear paired functions, namely, class L/L (Lack-Lack Liquidation), V/P (Villainy-Punishment), I-V/P (Interdiction-Violation of Interdiction-Punishment), and T-R/R (Test-Response to the Test-Reward/Retribution), as follows:

(1). Move of the class L/L

Ex.15: Tale 22.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } a^1 | \text{-----} | W^* \\ \text{I. } a^6 B^1 C \uparrow H^5 I^6 D^4 E^4 F^1 K^9 | \end{array}$$

(2). Move of the class V/P

Ex. 16: Tale 17.

$$\text{I. } A^{14} A^{17} + B^4 C f^1 \uparrow H^6 I^v U \downarrow^{**} W$$

(3). Move of the class I-V/P

Ex. 17: Tale 49.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } a^3 \uparrow D^2 E^2 D^1 E^1 D^1 E - K F^1 \\ \text{II. } \gamma^1 \downarrow \delta^1 U \end{array}$$

(4). Move of the class T-R/R

Ex. 18: Tale 37.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{I. } \beta^3 D^2 E^2 a^5 B^4 C \uparrow D^1 E^1 f^9 \downarrow | \text{-----} | K | \\ \text{II. } D^1 E^1 F^9 D^7 B^2 C \uparrow E^7 D^1 E^1 | F^9 | \downarrow \end{array}$$



As shown in Table 6 below, most of the Chinese tales are of the class L/L or V/P, which together account for 80% of the total number of moves in the fifty tale texts investigated. The most striking is class L/L, which occupies an absolute dominant position in Chinese *zhiguai* tales over all the other three classes with its number of occurrences alone constituting around 60% of the total text body. Classes I-V/P and T-R/R together make up the remaining 20% of the text body, with the number of occurrence of the latter amounting to two thirds of the remaining text body. If we take account of the result caused by the violation of an interdiction and compare it with that caused by a villainous act, it is possible to consider class I-V/P to be a sub-class of class V/P.

Table 6: Move Classification and Combination in the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale Texts

Tale No.	Class L/L	Class V/P	Class I-V/P	Class T-R/R	Simple	Compound	Complex	Compound-Complex
1	1+1					√		
2	1+1						√	
3	1				√			
4	1				√			
5	1		1				√	
6		1			√			
7	1+1	1						√
8	1+1		1					√
9	1	1					√	
10	1+1	1	1				√	
11	1				√			
12		1		1+1		√		
13		1+1					√	
14	1			1			√	
15	1+1			1+1				√
16		1+1	1				√	
17		1			√			
18	1		1				√	
19	1+1+1							√
20		1+1				√		
21	1+1			1			√	
22	1+1						√	
23		1			√			
24	1+1		1					√
25		1			√			
26				1+1		√		
27		1		1		√		
28	1+1	1					√	
29	1			1			√	
30	1	1				√		
31		1	1				√	
32		1+1	1				√	
33	1+1			1+1				√
34	1+1+1						√	
35	1+1+1						√	
36	1+1						√	
37	1			1			√	
38	1+1					√		

39	1+1+1+1+1							√
40	1+1+1							√
41	1	1					√	
42	1+1					√		
43				1	√			
44	1+1	1	1			√		
45	1+1	1+1+1		1			√	
46	1+1+1					√		
47	1	1					√	
48	1+1					√		
49	1		1			√		
50	1+1+1+1+1					√		
Total No. of Moves	72	26	10	15	8	13	21	8
	123							

• Move combination

Propp (1968: 93-94) sums up six major modes of move combination from the Russian fairy tales, which, however, are found to be ineffective when applied to analysis of the Chinese material owing to the above-mentioned differences and deviations of Chinese *zhiguai* tales from Russian fairy tales. This calls for an introduction of new rules for categorisation of modes of move combination in Chinese *zhiguai* tales.

A comparative study of tales and sentences reveals to us a striking resemblance between them in function and structure. Structurally, a sentence is the smallest unit which can express a complete idea. Likewise, a move is also the smallest structural unit which can make up a complete story. As sentences are grammatically divided into four types, namely, simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex, according to the number of S-V constructions and the manner of their combination, it is also possible for Chinese *zhiguai* tales to be analysed into four types according to the number of moves and the manner of their combination. A classification of Chinese *zhiguai* tales in terms of modes of move combination from a syntactical point of view will therefore yield four types of tales in correspondence with the four types of sentence, that is, simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex ones.

As illustrated in the following examples, a simple tale is one containing a single move (all single-move tales fall into this type). A compound tale contains two or more moves, each of which stands as a self-sufficient entity and exists independently of the other(s) within the tale, where *dramatis personae* act through moves as cohesive ties to

give cohesion and coherence to the whole story. A complex tale is one containing two or more moves, which are interwoven with and are therefore dependent on each other in that a new move begins before the termination of the previous one. A compound-complex tale contains three or more moves, in which one or more moves exist independently of another or other moves within the tale, while, at the same time, one or more moves are dependent upon one or more other moves within the same tale:

(1). Simple Tale

Ex. 19: Tale 6.

I.  $A^{16}B^4C\uparrow H^1I^1U$

Ex. 20. Tale 25.

I.  $\beta^2A^{14}\uparrow H^8I^8U\downarrow$

(2). Compound Tale

Ex. 21: Tale 1

I.  $a^6\uparrow G^3K^4$

II.  $a^6\uparrow K-$

EX. 22: Tale 50

I.  $\beta^3a^5F_9^6K^6$

II.  $a^6B^1C\uparrow F^3K^5$

III.  $a^1B^4F^9W^*G\downarrow$

IV.  $a^6B^4D^1C\uparrow E^1F^1H^1I^1K^5$

V.  $a^6F^7K^9$

(3). Complex Tale

Ex. 23: Tale 13

I.  $A^{14}B^4D^3E^3F^5|-----|U$

II.  $\zeta^2A^{13}\uparrow F^6B^4CF^1\uparrow I^5|$

Ex. 24: Tale 45.

- I.  $A^{22}\beta^2B^8a^6C\uparrow\eta^1\theta^1\downarrow K-$  | --- | ----- | ----- | ----- | --- | --- | ----- | --- | --- | --- |  $K^5$  |  
 II.  $A^{22}$  | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | --- | --- |  $F^3Ex$  | --- |  $U$  |  
 III.  $B^4A^{22}M$  | ----- | ----- | ----- | --- | --- | ----- |  $N$  | --- | ----- | --- | --- |  $U$  |  
 IV.  $B^1A^6$  | ----- | --- | --- | ----- | --- | --- | ----- | --- |  $U$  |  
 V.  $B^1D^1E^1F_9^6B^2C\uparrow D^1E^1\downarrow$  | --- |  $F^9$  |  
 VI.  $a^6$  |  $G^2$  | ----- | --- | --- |  $\downarrow K^9$  |

#### (4). Compound-Complex Tale

Ex. 25: Tale 24.

- I.  $a^6\uparrow$  | ---- |  $F^9K^4$  |  
 II.  $\gamma^3\uparrow$  | ----- |  $\delta^3U$  |  
 III.  $a^6B^1+D^1\uparrow E^1F^1F^7T^6K^5\downarrow$

Ex. 26: Tale 39.

- I.  $a^1\beta^4F^5F^8\downarrow W^*$   
 II.  $a^6G^4D^7E^7F^1K^5+\downarrow$   
 III.  $a^1\beta^3B^4F_9^6G^4+D^7E^7F^6G^1+K^5$   
 IV.  $a^6$  | ----- |  $D^7$  | ----- |  $(D^2E^2)\times 4$  |  $E^7$  |  $F^1+K^4$  |  
 V.  $\beta^4a^6$  |  $B^1$  |  $C\uparrow$  | ----- |  $K^5$  |

Although the Chinese material shows some regular deviations from the Russian fairytales in one way or another, there are still quite a few common features between them. Of the four modes of move combination listed above, *zhiguai* tales of compound moves are found to be no different from Propp's first type of move combination in that "one move directly follows another", as shown in Tale 1, and 50, and tales of complex moves to correspond respectively to Propp's second, third, and fifth types of move combination, as shown in Tale 13, and 45.

In Tale 13, the second move begins before the termination of the first one, with action interrupted by an episodic move, and the first move is not completed until the episode is completed. What is more, the two moves in this tale have a common ending in that the villain who commits villainies in the first and second moves is punished at the end of the story.

Tale 45 presents a much more complicated scheme "as an episode is interrupted in its turn". With each of the six moves embedded in between and in turn by one or more functions belonging to another move, a crisscross network structure arises, since moves in this tale are *interlocked* by functions rather than *interrupted* by episodes. This crisscross network structure seems to be absent from the Russian fairytales, where an episode, or more exactly, an embedding move, develops in a linear direction without being interrupted throughout to an end. More examples of this interlocking relationship between moves within a tale are as follows.

Ex. 27: Tale 15.

I.  $A^{20}a^6K_{ix}$

II.  $\uparrow a^6 | \text{-----} | \text{-----} | K^4 |$

III.  $D^1E-+A^{21} | \text{-----} | \text{---} | F= |$

IV.  $D^1E^1 | \text{---} | \text{----} | f^1 |$

Ex. 28: Tale 34.

I.  $a^6D^1E^1F^9 | \text{----} | \text{---} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | K^5 |$

II.  $a^5B^1 | \text{---} | D^7 | \text{-----} | E^7 | f^1K^4 |$

III.  $a^6 | B^1 | C\uparrow D^2E^2f^9\downarrow | K^{11} |$

In marked contrast, the fourth and sixth types of move combination Propp (1968: 93-94) extracts from the Russian fairy tales seem to be lacking in their Chinese *zhiguai* counterparts. It may not be unusual for Chinese *zhiguai* tales to begin with two villainies at once, as exemplified in Tale 17. In this case, however, the two villainies, being of the same nature, namely, homicide, are committed by one and the same villain, a serpent, and liquidated at once with the serpent slaughtered by the heroine Li Ji, hence a course of action completely different from what Propp (1968: 93) describes of the fourth type of move combination. As regards the sixth type of move combination, none of the fifty *zhiguai* tales analysed is found to be in correspondence with the Russian fairytale, which

is described by Propp (1968: 94) as containing two seekers, who part in the middle of the first move with omens at a road marker before giving each other a signaller.

As mentioned before, a tale can contain a single move and can also be composed of more than one move. In our data for analysis, single-move tales are greatly outnumbered 42 to 8 by multi-move ones, which thus make up more than 80% of the total tale text body. Seven of the eight single-move tales belong to Group 1 and 2 tales produced before the Tang dynasty, the average number of moves per tale of which is significantly smaller than that of Group 3 and 4 tales produced between the Tang and Qing dynasties, as shown above in Table 3.

As shown in Table 6, most of the fifty Chinese *zhiguai* tales investigated are of compound and/or complex structures, a total of 84% of the whole corpus. It is worth noting that compound and complex tales appear more often in later groups of tales than earlier ones, which also indicates the general trend of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction becoming more and more structurally sophisticated and complicated with the passage of time.

### Section 3: Tale roles in classical Chinese supernatural fiction

- Distribution of tale roles

Closely associated with the identification of functions is the identification of tale roles in *Morphology*, in which Propp (1968: 79-91) devotes three chapters to discussing distributions of functions among *dramatis personae*, ways of introducing new characters and the attributes of *dramatis personae*. Morphologically speaking, tale roles are a functional concept and are not identical with characters in a tale. In theory, a tale can have an unlimited number of characters, but the number of tale roles in it is rather limited, no more than seven. Just as a tale can contain all the 31 functions, a tale can also have all seven tale roles, but it is far from being the case that all of them appear in one and the same tale text.

Distributed among characters in line with the spheres of action they involve in a tale are the seven tale roles: (1) villain, (2) donor, (3) helper, (4) sought-for person, (5)



dispatcher, (6) hero, and (7) false hero. As to the seven tale roles, we have made a brief account of their sphere(s) of action that Propp (1968: 79-80) extracts from the Russian fairy tales in Chapter Six. In this section, we will focus on an analysis of the distribution of tale roles in Chinese *zhiguai* fiction, and the corresponding relations between tale roles and spheres of action based on the information contained in Table 7.

As is the case with the sequence of functions and the occurrence of members of paired functions, in the distribution of tale roles Chinese *zhiguai* tales also display some distinctive features worth our attention. As shown in the following table, these features manifest themselves mainly in the following three aspects: (1) the number of tale roles in a tale, (2) the occurrence of tale roles in correspondence with tale class, and (3) tales roles in correspondence with sphere(s) of action.

Table 7. Distribution of Propp's Seven *Dramatis Personae* in the Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale Texts<sup>7</sup>

Tale No.	No. of Villain	No. of Donor	No. of Helper	No. of Sought-for Person	No. of Dispatcher	No. of Hero/Heroine	No. of False Hero
1						1	
2		1				1+1	
3						1	
4		(3)	(2)+(x)			1	
5		1	1		1	1+1	
6	1		1			1	
7	1				1	1	
8		1~	1	1~		1	
9	1			1	1	1	
10	1		1~	1~	1~	1	
11		1	1			1	
12	1	1~	(2)+1~		1~+1~	1	
13	1	1	1		1~	1~+1	
14		1				1+1	
15	1+(2)	1~	1			1~	
16	1+(2)~		1		1	(2)~	
17	1	1	1			1	
18		1+1~	1~		1	1	
19		(2)~	(2)~			(2)	
20	1		1		1	1+1	1
21		1	1~	1~	1	1~+1~	(2)
22	1	1		1~	1~	1	
23	1					1	
24		1~	1~		1~	1	
25	1					1	
26	1~	1				1~	

<sup>7</sup> In cases where one character is involved in more than one sphere of action in a tale, the number will be given with the sign ~ following it. If more than one character is involved in more than one sphere of action in one tale, the number will be given in bold-type form in order to distinguish him/her from the other one(s). In cases where there is more than one character playing the same role in a tale, the characters are counted as one tale role, and the number given in round brackets. If the exact of number of characters playing one and the same role is not given in the tale, the sign x will be given in round brackets.

27	(2)	1				1+1	
28	1~	1~	1			1+1~	
29		1~	1	1~		1	
30	1	1~	1+1~	1~	1~	1	
31	1	1	1	1		1	
32	1+1~			1~		1	1
33		1+1+1	1+1	1		1	
34		(3)~	(3)~+1		(3)~	1	
35	1~		1	1	1	1+1~	
36			1+1+(x)	1		1	1
37			1+1~+1~		1~	1+1~	
38		1~	1~		(2)+1~	1	1
39		1+1~	(2)+1	1~	1~	1+1+1~	
40	1~				1~	1	
41	1				1	1	
42		1		1		1	
43		1+1	1			1	
44	1	1~	(2)	1	1~	1+1	
45	1+1+1		1		1	1	
46			1+1~			1+1+1~	
47	1		1+1+1	1		1	
48			1+1	1		1	
49		1				1	
50		1~+1~	1~	1	1~	1+1~	
No. of Tale Role Appearance	30	36	48	16	25	67	5
Total No. of the Seven Tale Role Appearances		227					
Average No. of Tale Role Appearance Per Tale Text		4.6					

1. The number of tale roles:

- 1). The minimum number of tale roles in a tale is one, as exemplified in Tale 1 and 3.
- 2). The maximum number of tale roles in a tale is six, as shown in Tale 21, 30, and 44, and no tale text in the corpus investigated contains all the seven *dramatis personae*.
- 3). The average number of tale role appearances per tale text is 4.6.
- 4). The number of tale roles in a tale text is in positive proportion to the number of functions and moves in it: the more tale roles a tale text contains, the more complicated the story tends to be.

2. The occurrence of tale roles in correspondence with tale class:

- 1). The most frequent tale role in Chinese *zhiguai* fiction is hero/heroine, with a total of sixty-seven appearances, more than double that of villain, which corresponds with the dominant position in *zhiguai* fiction of L/L-class tales, a type of tales that can exist without the tale role of villains.

- 2). Just second in frequency to the role of hero/heroine is that of helper, who can appear in all of the four types of tales with a total of forty-eight appearances.
  - 3). The role of villain is essential only to tales of the class V/P although it occasionally occurs in other types of tales. When it occurs in a non-V/P-class tales, more often than not the villain appears as a minor figure of little functional significance, whose role is limited to that of introducing the hero/heroine in the tale.
  - 4). The role of donor, like that of hero or helper, can appear in all the four types of tales. A donor plays a major role only in T-R/R-class tales, and in all the other cases, its role is more of an auxiliary nature, as is that of helper.
  - 5). The role of sought-for person in Chinese *zhiguai* fiction appears almost unexceptionally in L/L-class tales, in which the sought-for person is mostly a supernatural female being (she-ghosts, fox spirits, or goddesses) whose marriage or romantic union with the hero terminates the initial lack on the part of the hero of an individual (*a*<sup>1</sup>).
  - 6). The role of dispatcher is most likely to be found in tales of the class L/L and V/P, and seldom appears in the other two types of tales.
  - 7). The least frequent tale role is that of the false hero, whose appearances add up to only five, which tallies with the rare occurrence of the paired functions L-Ex. In our research data, this role mostly makes its appearance in tales of the class L/L, as shown in Tale 21, 36, and 38, where the role of false hero is of little functional significance to the course of action in the move, as is the role of villain in a non-V/P-class tales.
3. Tale roles in correspondence with sphere(s) of action:
- 1). Nearly half of the fifty *zhiguai* tales have *dramatis personae* appearing as pure tale roles with spheres of action exactly corresponding to characters.
  - 2). The sphere of action fails to correspond with the character when a single character is involved in more than one sphere of action in one and the same tale, as exemplified in the following cases:

- (1). The villain plays the role of donor. In this case, s/he is either an unwitting donor or a hostile one, as shown in Tale 28.
- (2). The villain plays the role of dispatcher on whose order the hero takes his departure from home. In such a case, the action of dispatching a character away from home on a mission is carried out against the will of the character, as shown in Tale 40.
- (3). The villain plays the role of hero in that he is first punished for committing a crime, and as a result of the punishment arises a kind of lack, which is eventually liquidated with the help of a magic agent, as shown in Tale 28.
- (4). The hero plays the role of villain. In such cases, he comes to an untimely end, although he commits a crime/villainy unconsciously or unintentionally against a third character in the tale, as shown in Tale 16, or loses what he has obtained before, as shown in Tale 26.
- (5). The hero plays the role of dispatcher. The movement of a character through these two spheres of action occurs in tales where there are two or more heroes, one of whom sends the other on a mission to liquidate a kind of lack or punish a villain, as shown in Tale 13.
- (5). A character covers spheres of action related to the role of donor, helper, and/or dispatcher in one and the same tale, as shown in Tale 12, 18, 19, 24, 30, 34, 37, 38, 44, and 50. In these cases, the character dispatches a person, offers service and donates gifts of his own accord in the interest of the hero.
- (6). A sought-for person also acts as a donor, helper, dispatcher, or a heroine in one and the same tale. In this case, she changes her role into that of the sought-for person after she has fulfilled an action required of a donor, helper, or a dispatcher, as shown in Tale 8, 10, 22, and 29. A reverse order of this occurs when a female character acts both as a sought-for person and heroine. In this case, she first fulfils an action required of the role of sought-for person by marrying the hero, and then

performs the function as a heroine to eliminate a misfortune/lack or punish a villain, as shown in Tale 21, and 39.

- Deviations in the distribution of functions among *dramatis personae*

The deviations exhibited from Russian fairy tales by Chinese *zhiguai* tales regularly arise from the corresponding relations of villains and heroes to paired functions A-U and a-K. Propp (1968: 50) defines the hero in a fairy tale as a character who either directly suffers from the action of the villain in the complication (the one who senses some kind of lack), or who agrees to liquidate the misfortune or lack of another person. Propp's (1968: 79) definition of the role of villain is made closely in association with such spheres of actions as committing villainies, causing misfortunes or lacks, and ending up punished.

Conversely, in Chinese *zhiguai* tales, a villain sometimes also experiences a kind of lack. In the case of a multi-move tale of the class L/L, the hero may feel the lack in one move, and the villain in another. Although they both suffer from a lack, generally the hero achieves a positive result for his effort to liquidate the lack, while the villain gets a negative result. The negative result that the villain gets mainly takes the following forms:

1. The villain liquidates his lack but the punishment he provokes for his villainy eventually negates the liquidation, as exemplified in Tale 31 and 32. In the former tale, the villain satisfies his lust for sex by seducing, raping and kidnapping a widowed woman, and finally is beaten to death; in the latter tale, the villain realises his wish to marry a woman at the cost of three lives, but is haunted to death at length by the revenging ghost of his former concubine he killed.

Ex. 29: Tale 31

I.  $F^1 \gamma^1 a^1 A^{21} + \delta^1 K^4$  -----| U

$$\text{II. } \varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 \eta^1 \theta^1 \eta^3 \theta^3 A^1 B^8 \uparrow |$$

Ex. 30: Tale 32

$$\begin{aligned} \text{I. } a^1 | \text{-----} | E^1 + A^{14} W^* | \text{-----} | U | \\ \text{II. } D^1 + A^9 | \text{-----} | \text{-----} | \text{---} | U | \\ \text{III. } \gamma^2 \delta^4 B^1 C \uparrow L H^7 E x I^7 | \end{aligned}$$

2. The villain liquidates his lack but in a most ironical way. A good example of this is Tale 35, in which the villain commits the crime of murdering a girl of humble birth in order to avoid a pre-destined marriage with her, only to find that the woman he marries years later is the girl he tried to kill. The villain seems left unpunished at the end of the story, although retributive justice is done to him through a marriage with a girl of low birth against his wish.

Ex. 31: Tale 35

$$\begin{aligned} \text{I. } a^1 \varepsilon^1 \zeta^1 B^8 C \uparrow \varepsilon^1 \zeta^1 \eta^1 \theta^1 \text{---} | \downarrow | \text{-----} | W^* | \\ \text{II. } A^{14} | \text{--} | \text{-----} | \text{---} | a^6 B^4 C \uparrow K^5 \\ \text{III. } \beta^2 a^1 B^4 C K^{11} | \end{aligned}$$

3. The villain feels a kind of lack but fails to have it liquidated, thus resulting in a negative effect of function K. As is shown in Tale 40, the villain forces his maidservant to go into a mountain to search for a magical herb, but the girl comes back empty-handed.

Ex. 32: Tale 40

$$\begin{aligned} \text{I. } A^{20} | \uparrow | a^5 F^{vi} F^7 K^5 | \\ \text{II. } a^1 | \text{-----} | \varepsilon^3 \zeta^1 P r^2 R s^1 \eta^3 \theta^3 K^3 | \\ \text{III. } \varepsilon^1 \zeta^1 a^3 B^2 \uparrow \downarrow K \text{--} \end{aligned}$$



An exceptional case happens with Tale 28, in which Madam Three at Ban Bridge is punished for her villainy. As a result of the punishment, she suffers from a kind of lack, and eventually has it liquidated through a magical helper, who lends his help to her on the grounds that she has received enough punishment for her wrong-doings. It is worth noting that the hero in this story is not a man of noble character. He punishes the villain just to serve his own selfish purpose. Morphologically, he is a hero, but morally, he is not much different from a villain.

#### Section 4. Conclusion

Classical Chinese fiction of the supernatural and strange originated from myths, fables, parables and folk legends around the Warring States Period, took shape during the Six Dynasties, grew into maturity under the Tang and Five Dynasties, and reached its climax in the early Qing after a long period of slow but steady development during the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties. This observation fits in well with the morphological analysis of the data of our corpus, as demonstrated in the previous chapter.

*Zhiguai* fiction distinguishes itself as a genre of strange writings in many respects. In terms of the sequence of functions, "complication functions"  $A/aBC\uparrow$  tend to occur without or prior to "preparatory functions"  $\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta\eta\theta$  without affecting the main course of actions in a *zhiguai* tale. However, when function pair  $\gamma\delta$  or function group DEF occurs prior to or without the complication functions  $A/aBC\uparrow$ , contrary to Propp's assumption (1968: 107) that this inversion of order does not constitute a new compositional scheme or a new axis, a substantive change will occur to the course of action, and result in tales of class I-V/P or T-R/R in *zhiguai* fiction, which seem to be absent from the Russian fairy tales investigated by Propp.

As regards the number of occurrences of functions, function *a* enjoys a much higher frequency of appearance than function A. This constitutes another distinctive feature of Chinese *zhiguai* fiction. In the fictional world, a character can be confronted with various conflicts, which are either conflicts with other beings or conflicts with him/herself. The former is manifest as an external confrontation with a hostile force, namely, a villain, the latter as an internal confrontation with oneself, namely, the hero

him. *Zhiguai* fiction distinguishes itself in that the hero is more often than not situated in a conflict with himself in his attempt to overcome a kind of lack arising from *within* rather than imposed on him from *without*. This internal strife common in Chinese *zhiguai* tales accounts for the dominance of L/L-class tales in Chinese *zhiguai* literature. In line with the dominant position of L/L-class tales is the frequency of distribution of *dramatis personae*. Of the seven tale roles, the hero appears most often, while, in contrast, the villain has his frequency of appearance less than half of that of the hero.

As mentioned previously, Chinese *zhiguai* tales defy Proppian classification owing to their own distinctive features. A modified Dundes' model has thus been introduced. Based on the dominant presence of one of the four nuclear paired functions ( $\alpha$ -K/W, A-U,  $\gamma$ - $\delta$  and D-E-F), four most representative types of Chinese *zhiguai* tales are generated from the data of our corpus: Lack-Lack Liquidation (L/L), Villainy-Punishment (V/P), Interdiction-Violation of Interdiction-Punishment (I-V/P), and Test-Response-Reward/Retribution (T-R/R). Of the four classes of tales, the first two amounts to 80% of the total tale text body, while the last two makes up 20%. This ratio is also consistent with the distribution of functions among *dramatis personae* in the data of our corpus.

In terms of modes of move combination, Chinese *zhiguai* tales are analysable into four major types from a syntactical point of view: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. While sharing common features with the Russian fairytales, as is often the case with double-move *zhiguai* tales of a compound structure with one move immediately following another or with two moves having a common ending, Chinese *zhiguai* tales also display certain distinctive features, which are mostly manifested in the way of a move being interrupted by an episode. In the Russian fairytales, episodes in a multi-move tale tend to develop in a linear direction without being interrupted throughout to an end before the embedded move is completed. In contrast, more often than not, a move in a complex *zhiguai* tale is not interrupted by an episode but by part of the episode, which is in turn interrupted by part of another episode. With each of the move within a tale embedded in between and in turn by functions belonging to a different move, a complex network structure arises. In tales of this structure, are interwoven with each other by functions rather than interrupted by an episode.

Another discovery as a by-product of this research project is that Chinese *zhiguai* tales are found to bear a striking resemblance to North American Indian folktales in the frequent recurrence of  $\alpha$ -K (Lack-Lack Liquidation), and the rare occurrence of nuclear paired functions H-I (struggle-victory), and M-N (difficult task-solution to the task). This also accounts for a high frequency of appearance of the hero and a relative low frequency of appearance of the villain in Chinese *zhiguai* tales. The ubiquitous appearance in classical Chinese supernatural fiction of the "nuclear mortifeme sequence", Lack-Lack Liquidation, also distinguishes *zhiguai* tales from Russian fairytales, the classification of which into four types by Propp is simply based on the presence/absence of H-I and/or M-N.

The most important discovery of this research is perhaps that classical Chinese fiction of the strange and supernatural, as a whole, is highly structured, rather than "fragmentary and trivial street talk or alley conversation". Even in some of the early *zhiguai* writings, one can find a high level of sophistication in narration and construction. They are short and sometimes unsophisticated, but are not in the least formless or devoid of structure. On the contrary, they are quite stable and consistent in form and content, as evidenced by the great uniformity in the sequence of functions and distribution of functions among *dramatis personae*, and a high complexity in the manner of move combination.

## Appendix I

### A List of Fifty *Zhiguai* Tale for Morphological Analysis

#### Group 1: Tales from the pre-Wei period

1. "Kua Fu Zhu Rii" 夸父逐日 (Kua Fu Pursues the Sun)
2. "Gun Dao Xirang" 鯀盜息壤 (Gun Steals the Expanding Soil)
3. "Nüwa Bu Tian" 女媧補天 (Nüwa Mends the Firmament)
4. "Yu Gong Yi Shan" 愚公移山 (The Foolish Old Man Who Tried to Remove Mountains)
5. "Yi Yin Sheng Kong Sang" 伊尹生空桑 (Yi Yin Was Born of a Hollow Mulberry Tree)
6. "Li Bing Dou Jiangshen" 李冰斗江神 (Li Bing Fights the River Deity)

#### Group 2: Tales from the Six Dynasties

7. "Chu Wang Ying Nü" 楚王英女 (A Daughter of King Ying of the State of Chu)
8. "Tan Sheng" 談生 (Scholar Tan)
9. "Panhu" 盤瓠
10. "Nü Hua Can" 女化蠶 (From Woman into Silkworm)
11. "Dong Yong" 董永 (Dong Yong)
12. "Humu Ban" 胡毋班
13. "San Wang Mu" 三王墓 (The Tomb of Three Kings)
14. "Liang Fu" 諒輔
15. "Ding Shi Fu" 丁氏婦 (Ding's Wife)
16. "Wuxing Laoli" 吳興老狸 (An Old Fox of Wuxing)
17. "Li Ji" 李季
18. "Baishui Sunü" 白水素女 (The Goddess of the White River)
19. "Liu Chen Ruan Zhao" 劉晨阮肇 (Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao)
20. "Li Hua Ren" 狸化人 (From Wild Cat into Woman)
21. "Mai Fen Er" 買粉兒 (The Lad Who Bought Powder)
22. "Yuhang Guang" 余杭廣 (Guang, a Native of Yuhang)
23. "Fuyang Ren" 富陽人 (A Native of Fuyang)
24. "Huang Miao" 黃苗
25. "Xu Tiejiu" 徐鐵臼

#### Group 3: Tales from the Tang and Five Dynasties

26. "Hou Yu" 侯適

27. "Yang Bao" 楊寶
28. "Banqiao San Niangzi" 板橋三娘子 (Madam Three at Ban Bridge)
29. "Taiyin Furen" 太陰夫人 (Lady Taiyin)
30. "Wu Kan" 吳堪
31. "Xiangyang Laosou" 襄陽老叟 (An Old Man of Xiangyang)
32. "Dou Ning Qie" 竇凝妾 (Dou Ning's Concubine)
33. "Yang Wengbo" 陽翁伯
34. "Shi Xuanzhao" 釋玄照 (Monk Xuanzhao)
35. "Guanyuan Yingnü" 灌園女嬰 (The Baby Daughter of a Vegetable Gardener)
36. "Wang Daoping" 王道平
37. "Guan Lu" 管輅
38. "Wang Zizhen" 王子珍
39. "Tian Kunlun" 田昆仑

Group 4: Tales from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties

40. "Shi Huangjing" 食黃精 (The Magic Herbs)
41. "Hongzhou Shusheng" 洪州書生 (A Scholar of Hongzhou)
42. "Gou Sheng" 勾生 (Scholar Gou)
43. "Yi Yu Ji" 異魚記 (The Story of a Strange Fish)
44. "Wu Xiao Yuanwai" 吳小員外 (The Yong Squire Wu)
45. "Mao Lie Yin Yu" 毛烈陰獄 (Mao Lie Tried in Hell)
46. "Zhang Tong Ru Ming" 張童入冥 (A Lad Named Zhang Enters the Netherworld)
47. "Shenyang Dong Ji" 申陽洞記 (A Story of Shenyang Cave)
48. "Hua Bi" 畫壁 (The Mural)
49. "Lao Shan Daoshi" 勞山道士 (The Taoist Priest of Lao Mountain)
50. "Jiaona" 嬌娜 (Fox Fairy Jiaona)

## Appendix II

### An English version of the 50 *zhiguai* tale texts<sup>1</sup>

#### Tale 1. Kua Fu Pursues the Sun

In the Great Wasteland there was a mountain called Chengdu Zhaitian, where there once lived a giant named Kua Fu with a yellow snake dangling from each ear and a yellow snake held in each hand. Hou Tu, the Great Terra, begot Xin, and Xin begot Kua Fu.

Kua Fu failed to recognise his limited strength, intending to chase after the shadow of the sun. He caught up with the sun at the Yu Deep where the sun set every day. He took a drink from the Yellow River, which, however, could not quench his thirst. So he headed for the Great Lake, wishing to drink more water from it. Unfortunately, he died on the way before reaching there.

#### Tale 2. Gun Steals the Expanding Soil

There occurred a great flood with waves soaring as high as the sky. Gun stole some of the expanding soil from the Heavenly Emperor in order to cover the flooded land. The emperor then ordered Zhurong to decapitate Gun at the foot of Mt. Yu. Yu was then borne to this world from Gun's body. Knowing this, the emperor instructed Yu to sow the self-increasing earth to put an end to the flood.

#### Tale 3. Nüwa Mends the Firmament

In the distant past, the four extremities of the sky collapsed and the nine regions of the world split asunder. The sky did not cover the earth, nor did the earth support the sky. Raging fires and tempestuous floodwaters ran rampant in the world. Wild beasts devoured good people; ferocious birds preyed on the weak and the old.

Then came Nüwa, who melted five-coloured rocks to mend the sky, and cut the legs off a giant turtle and use them as pillars to support the sky. She also killed the black dragon to save the people of Jizhou, and brought the surging flood under control with the ash of some reeds.

Now the sky was repaired, its four extremities were propped up, the flood was tamed, peace was restored to Jizhou, the malicious birds and beasts were killed, and the good people were saved. They lived on the square earth with the round dome of the sky high above protecting them. The time finally came when savage beasts, harmful insects, and poisonous snakes did not harm each other any more with their claws, teeth or venom, and in fact, they no longer had any such evil desires.

Nüwa's merits and virtues were as lofty as the Heavens above and as vast as Earth below. Her fame was remembered by later generations and her light shone upon all on Earth. Sitting on a delicately-woven mattress in a thundering chariot drawn by winged dragons, holding propitious objects in her hands, she travelled freely over the clouds with a white dragon in front and a slithering snake to the rear. Accompanied by gods and immortals, she visited the ninth level of Heaven, and met the Heavenly Emperor at Ling Men, and there she rested in peace. She never showed off her deeds and achievements; all she wanted was to live a true life in harmony with the natural world.

#### Tale 4. The Foolish Old Man Who Tried to Remove Mountains

Once upon a time, there were two mountains lying south of Jizhou and north of Heyang. They were Mt. Taihang and Mt. Wangwu, both of which had a circumference of seven hundred *li* and stood as high as one hundred thousand *ren*.

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<sup>1</sup> All the tale texts are translated by me except the last three ones, which are taken from *Strange Tales from Make-Do Studio*, pp. 5-9, 19-24, and 25-37.



There was once an old man called the Foolish Old Man of the northern Mountain. He was nearly ninety years old and lived behind these mountains. The two mountains blocked his way to the south and he had to walk a long way around to go out and come back. Unable to bear it any more, he called a family meeting to discuss how to break a way through.

"If all of us try our best and work hard," the old man asked his family, "would it be possible for us to level the two mountains and open a way to the south of Yuzhou and the Han River?"

"Yes," his sons said.

But his wife did not think so. "With your energy," she said to the old man, "you couldn't remove a small hill like Kuifu. How can you level Mt. Taihang and Mt. Wangwu? And what's more, where would you unload the earth and stones?"

"We'd unload them at the end of the Bohai Sea and north of Yintu" The old man and his sons answered.

With the old man at the head, the whole family set out with tools in their hands. They broke off the rocks and dug up the earth and then carried the broken rocks and unearthed soil in baskets to the Bohai Sea. Next door lived a widow named Jingcheng who had a seven year old son. The boy came jumping and running to their aid. The sea was so far away that they left in winter and returned in summer.

One day the Wise Old Man of the winding river came over to the old man and said with a scornful smile, "What a fool! You're too old to pull out even one hair off the mountain, let alone so much earth and so many rocks!" The Foolish Old Man of the northern Mountain gave a long sigh and retorted, "You're so stubborn, just like a hard rock; even the widow and her little son understand better than you. Although I shall die one day, I have sons who will live on after me, and they will have sons and grandsons, and their sons and grandsons will have sons and grandsons. There will be no end to the generations of my family, but the mountains will never grow higher. Why can't we remove them?" The Wise Old Man could not find a word with which to refute him.

A god with two snakes held in his hands heard their talk. Fearing that they would dig away the mountain one day, he reported it to the Heavenly Emperor. Moved by the old man's will and resolution, the Heavenly Emperor ordered the two sons of Kua'er to carry the two mountains away on their backs and put one east of Shuzhou and the other south of Yongzhou. Since then, there have been no more mountains between the south of Jizhou and the southern bank of the Han River.

#### Tale 5. Yi Yin Was Born of a Hollow Mulberry Tree

A girl in the kingdom of Youshenshi was picking mulberry leaves when she found a baby in the hollow trunk of a mulberry tree. She presented the baby to the king. The king appointed an officer to take care of the boy while ordering men to look into the baby's background.

It was reported that the baby's mother had lived on the Yi River before she gave birth to this baby. One night a god told her in a dream to flee to the east and not to look back once she saw water flowing out of her stone mortar. The next day, she found water oozing from the mortar. She broke the secret to her neighbours before fleeing to the east. After walking ten *li*, she took a look back at her hometown, which had been submerged in the floodwater. No sooner had she turned back than her body changed into a hollow mulberry tree. This was why the baby boy was named Yi Yin, and this is what we know about his birth.

When Yi Yin grew up, he became a virtuous man. Admiring his merits and talents, King Tang wanted Yi Yin to assist him in state affairs, but the king of Youshenshi refused to let Yi Yin go although Yi Yin himself had long since desired to serve in the court of King Tang. So King Tang proposed marriage to a daughter of the King of Youshenshi. The king of Youshenshi was very happy about it. He married off one of his daughters to King Tang with Yi Yin as dowry for his daughter.

In order to protect Yi Yin from all evils, King Tang conducted a grand ceremony, at which Yi Yin was placed near smoking reeds and burning sacrificial torches and had his body smeared with animal blood. The next day, Yi Yin was summoned to the court to explain to King Tang how to attain the perfection of flavour.

#### Tale 6. Li Bing Fights the River Deity

After conquering Shu, King Zhao of Qin appointed Li Bing governor of the newly-occupied area. Li Bing built many water conservancy projects on the Pijiang River to irrigate hundreds and thousands of acres of farmland along the river valley.

At that time, there was a god ruling the river, who demanded two girls as wives each year. If the local people failed to meet his demands, there would be a flood. Now an official in charge came to report the matter to Li Bing, saying, "A million coins has to be collected to buy girls for the river god."

"No need of a single coin", said Li Bing, "I've got girls for the god already." When the day came to throw two girls into the river as demanded, Li Bing had his two daughters dressed up, ready to be presented to the river god as wives. Then Li went to the divine altar of the god temple. He raised a wine cup to the altar and said, "Today I have brought my two daughters to your presence. I take it as a great honour to marry my daughters to a river god. My god, reveal your noble true features before us, please. Allow me to propose a toast to you." After saying this, Li emptied his cup and showed the empty bottom of the cup to the altar. Seeing the wine remaining full to the brim of the cup on the altar, Li Bing burst into a rage, and shouted in anger, "My River God, you're so arrogant that I have no choice but fight you to save my face."

Li drew out his sword and disappeared from temple. Soon, two big grey bulls were seen fighting on the riverbank. Quite a while later, Li returned, dripping with sweat. He gave an order to his subordinates, saying, "I've been almost exhausted. You should help me fighting the river god. The bull facing south with a white stripe around the body is me. The stripe is my official ribbon." Then he went back to the fight. Finally the grey bull facing north ended up shot with an arrow by his chief assistant. With the death of the river deity came all the trouble to an end.

#### Tale 7. A Daughter of King Ying of the State of Chu

During the Warring States period, there was a man named Lu Shaoqian, who had obtained a magic figure from an immortal, with which he could subdue demons and vanquish monsters.

The youngest daughter of the King of Chu was bewitched and Lu was summoned to expel the goblins for her. When he got to a place dozens of *li* from the capital city, it got dark. So he decided to stop by the roadside for the night. That night, a man came sitting in a chariot with a top like a turtle-shell, followed by hundreds of cavalymen. The man, who called himself Bojin, said that he had come all that way just to pay homage to Shaoqian. He took out a few of urns of court wine and spread a rich feast in his honour. Before he took his leave, he said to Shaoqian, "I've caused illness to the princess. If you have any regard for me, please return to where you have come from and I'll give you one hundred thousand coins in exchange." The lad took the money, and pretended to make his way home. But in fact, he took another road to the capital city of Chu.

When he arrived at the house of the princess, he saw the door pushed open and heard someone saying inside, "Shaoqian has made a fool of your father." He exercised his magic power at once and instantly a gust of strong wind blew up from the southeast. He rushed into the house and found in it a basin filled with blood. The princess had breathed her last. At midnight, however, she came back to life. The king of Chu sent men to track down the wind. They found in the place where the wind had died away a big dead snake several *zhang* long and hundreds and thousands of small snakes lying also dead around it.

An imperial edict was then issued to the nation to make it known to the public that two hundred thousand coins of money disappeared from the Treasury Office along with several tables of food and drink from the Imperial Household Office. Hearing of this, Shaoqian had a cart loaded with the money and escorted it to the capital. He wrote a letter to the king to give a full account of the story behind the strange things. The king felt quite surprised, wondering how it could have happened.

#### Tale 8. Scholar Tan

Tan was a scholar aged forty who was still single. He liked the *Book of Songs* so much that whenever he read it, he would be carried away with it. One midnight, Tan was reading the poems in it when suddenly a splendidly-dressed beautiful young lady of about 15 years old appeared before him. After expressing her wish to be his wife, the lady said, "I'm different from the ordinary people. Please don't expose me to

candlelight until three years after we're married." They then became wife and husband and the woman gave birth to a son.

When the boy was two years old, Mr. Tan could not resist the temptation of looking at his wife by the candlelight. One night when his wife had fallen into sleep, he took a secret look at her. In the candlelight, he saw her body above the waist fully fleshed like an ordinary person but the lower part remaining in skeleton. The light woke up his wife, and she said to Tan, "You have let me down. I will be soon coming back to life. You shouldn't have been so impatient to expose me to the candlelight. Why couldn't you wait for one more year?" Deeply regretful, Mr. Tan apologised again and again. With tears running down her cheeks, she said, "Although we can't maintain the relationship between us as wife and husband, I'm still worried about our son. I know you are poor and life will be even harder with a child to support. Please come with me and I'll give you something." Following her, Mr. Tan entered a grand mansion, where the buildings and utensils were all out of the ordinary. His wife took out a pearl-decorated robe and handed it to Tan, saying, "With it, you can live a decent life." After saying this, she tore off a part of Tan's sleeve as a souvenir and then vanished.

Years later, Mr. Tan went to Suiyang with the robe and he sold the robe for a large sum of money to a servant who bought it for his master, Mr. Wang of Suiyang. When Wang got it, he recognised it at first glance, saying, "This used to be my dead daughter's robe. The man who sold it must be a tomb digger!" Then he sent for Tan and questioned him. The poor scholar told the whole story to Wang, but could not convince him. Wang then went to her daughter's grave in person and found it the same as before, but when it was opened, he found the part of Tan's sleeve inside the coffin. He called in Tan's son and felt this child bore a striking resemblance to his daughter. Now Wang came to realise that Mr. Tan had told a true story. He summoned in Mr. Tan and gave him back the robe and recognised him as his son-in-law. Later, he recommended Tan's son to the emperor, who made him palace attendant.

#### Tale 9. Panhu

During the reign of Emperor Gao Xin, there lived an old woman who had long suffered from ear trouble. A court doctor cured her of the trouble by picking out a worm as big as a cocoon from her ear. Before she left the palace, the woman put the worm in a gourd-like container, and covered it with a plate. Soon the worm was transformed into a five-colour striped dog. The dog was named "Panhu", and was kept in the palace.

At that time, the northern Rongwu barbarians were powerful and prosperous and they made frequent attacks on the borders. Emperor Gao Xin sent generals to the frontiers on punitive expeditions against the barbarians, but they could not check the fierce attacks. Then the emperor called for help from warriors throughout his empire, offering a reward of a thousand *jin* of gold, a fief of ten thousand households and his own daughter to whoever could get him the head of the Rongwu chieftain.

Not long afterwards, Panhu came running to the imperial palace with a head between his teeth. Upon closer examination, the emperor decided that it was no other than the head he desperately wanted but he found it hard to decide how to reward the dog.

His ministers said, "Panhu is just a beast and should not be rewarded with an official position or a fief, let alone a marriage with the princess. Although Panhu has made great contributions to the empire, there is no way of rewarding him."

Hearing their discussions, the princess said to the emperor, "Your majesty has offered me as a reward. It turns out that the dog killed the chieftain of our enemy, uprooting the trouble for the nation. This must be the will of Heaven. Without Heaven's help, a dog like Panhu could never have achieved such a feat. The son of Heaven must keep his promise. Dukes and princes must act in good faith. Your majesty shouldn't lose the confidence of your subjects for the sake of me. If you broke your word this time, a great disaster would fall on your empire."

Fearing punishment from Heaven, the emperor was persuaded into allowing Panhu to take the princess to Mount Nanshan, a remote mountain overgrown with grass and trees. The princess took off her luxurious royal clothes, twisted and fastened her hair into a bun in the style of a maid, changed into a coarse work suit, followed Panhu all the way through hills and streams into a stone cave and settled down.

#### Tale 10. From Woman into Silkworm

It is said that long long ago, a man went on a long journey, leaving behind his daughter with a horse under her care. Living all by herself, the daughter felt lonely and could not help missing her father. One day, she said to the horse in a joking way, "If you bring back Daddy, I'll marry you." Without a moment of hesitation, the horse wrenched itself free from the reins and galloped off in the direction of where her father stayed.

Surprised and delighted at the sight of his horse, the man mounted the horse. Looking back at the direction from which it had come, the horse kept whining. The man thought to himself, "What's the matter with the beast? Something must have gone wrong with my daughter." So he rode back only to find that she was safe and sound at home. Although the stallion was a mere beast, it was clearly capable of understanding human emotions; after this, it was given much greater care. But the beast refused to eat. What's more, whenever the girl passed by the stable, the horse would be excited beyond control. This happened quite a few times.

Feeling something was up, the man questioned his daughter in secret about the horse. The girl then told her father the joke she had made with the beast, saying, "it must have taken the joke seriously." "Keep this secret," the man said to her daughter, "for it might bring shame to us if anyone finds it out. Keep off the horse from today on." On the sly, the man shot the horse to death with an arrow. He flayed it and hung the hide in the courtyard.

Later, the man went away from home again on business. While playing in the courtyard with a girl next door, his daughter kicked at the hide of the dead horse, saying, "You beast! How did you dare to think of having me as your wife? You were courting death for yourself. Now you've ended up shot and flayed."

No sooner had the girl finished cursing than the hide suddenly sprang up, galloping out of the yard with the girl wrapped inside. Her playmate was so frightened at the sight that she did not dare to come forward to her rescue. Instead, she hurried to break the terrible news to the girl's father. The man rushed back and searched high and low for the beast but failed. Several days had passed before the girl and the horse were found on a big tree in the form of a silkworm spinning cocoons bigger and thicker than anybody had ever seen before.

The women in the neighbourhood picked them from the tree and took them home for breeding. From these cocoons they could reel off much more raw silk than from other cocoons. The tree was thus named *sang* (the Chinese name for the mulberry tree), whose sound suggested "death" or "loss". From then on, people began to plant *sang* trees. This has come to be known as the origin of sericulture.

### Tale 11. Dong Yong

In the Han dynasty, there lived a man named Dong Yong in the prefecture of Qiancheng. He lost his mother at a very early age and then lived with his father. He spared no effort in helping his father till the land. In harvest, he would pull a small cart after his father. When his father died, he could not afford a funeral. He sold himself into slavery and with the money, buried his father. Moved by his filial piety, a landlord gave Dong Yong ten thousand copper coins and allowed him to go home to arrange funeral matters. After observing three years of mourning for his father, Dong Yong left home for the labour service. On the way, he came across a young woman, who said to him, "I'm willing to be your wife." She then joined him on the way to the landlord's house.

The master said, "You don't have to pay back the money."

"Thank you very much for your generosity," Dong Yong answered. "Without your money, I would never have been able to bury my father. Though I'm low-born, I'll work as hard as I can to repay your kindness."

The master asked, "What can your woman do for me?"

"She can weave cloth," Dong replied.

"If you stick to doing something for me in return," the master said, "you might as well ask your wife to weave for me one hundred bolts of silk."

Dong's wife then began to weave silk. Ten days later when she finished the task, the woman walked out of the room and said to Dong Yong, "I'm a Heavenly Weaver. Your filial piety had moved the Heavenly



Emperor, so he ordered me to help you pay your debt." After saying this, she rose into the sky and flew away.

## Tale 12. Humu Ban

Humu Ban, who styled himself Humu Jiyu, lived near Mt. Tai. One day he went out on a journey. When he arrived at the foot of the mountain, a mounted escort in red uniform came out to him from behind a tree and said to him, "The god of Mt. Tai invites you to his palace." Humu was frightened that he was quite at a loss how to reply. Then another escort came to call him over. Humu had no alternative but to follow them. After a while, the escorts asked Humu to close his eyes. A short while later when he opened his eyes, a magnificent palace came into view. Humu entered the palace and presented himself to the mountain deity, who gave a banquet in his honour.

At the table, the god said, "I have summoned you solely to ask you to deliver a letter to my son-in-law."

"Where does your daughter live?" Humu Ban asked.

"She is the wife of a river god," the mountain god answered.

"I am only too happy to do it for you," Humu Ban said, "but how can I find the place and get there?"

"You will go by boat. When it goes to the middle of the river, tap on the boat board, call out for female servants and somebody will come out for the letter."

After Humu took over the letter, the escort who had just led him in asked him to close his eyes. Instantly he found himself back on the road from which he had come. Humu continued his journey to the west. When his boat went to the middle of the river, he called out for help. Sure enough, a maid appeared. She took the letter from Humu and disappeared. After a while, the maid came out again, saying, "The Lord of the river is waiting for you." At her request, Humu closed his eyes: on opening them again, he saw that he was in the river god's palace. The god gave a big welcome banquet in his honour and they had a very pleasant conversation. When the time came for Humu Ban to take his leave, the deity said, "Thank you for coming all the way to deliver the letter. I have just a small gift for you." He then turned to the attendants and said, "Go and bring my black silk sandals here." With the shoes in his hands, Humu went out of the palace and soon found himself back in the boat.

Humu stayed in Chang'an for one year before returning home. Nearing Mt. Tai on his way back, he didn't dare to pass by without paying homage to the mountain god. He tapped at a tree and said, "I've just returned from Chang'an. I have a letter for the Lord." Immediately, the escort appeared and led Humu Ban in as before. Humu presented the letter from the river god to the Lord of Mt. Tai. The god thanked him, saying, "I'll reward you." After that, Humu went out to the toilet. On the way, he suddenly saw his dead father in chains doing hard labour with hundreds of other ghosts. Humu Ban came up to his father, saying with tears in his eyes, "Why have you been exiled to this place?" His father answered, "I died an unfortunate man and was sentenced to three years of forced labour. Now I have done hard labour for two years but I really can't bear it any longer. I can see you are now in the favour of the God of Mt. Tai. Ask him for mercy on me. Beg him to exempt me from the penal servitude. I only wish to be made the god of our home village." With his wish in mind, Humu Ban went in to plead with the Lord of Mt. Tai to show mercy to his father. The lord said, "The living and the dead don't go the same way, for there is no relation between them, so you don't have to feel sad for him." But Humu Ban still entreated piteously until the lord agreed to his request.

Humu Ban never expected that his sons would die one after another, less than two years after his return home. Terrified and perplexed, he hurried to the mountain and knocked at the tree. Again the escort came out to usher him in. In the presence of the god, Humu sobbed out the sad story of the death of his sons. "My Lord, I'm sorry if I offended you with improper words when I took my leave of you last time. My sons died one after another after I came home. I'm afraid that more disasters are waiting for me. Now I'm here to place myself at your mercy."

Clapping his hands in joy, the lord said, "As I told you last time, the living and the dead take different ways and live different lives. There's no relation between them. Do you understand?" He immediately sent for Humu Ban's ghost father. In no time, his father arrived. The lord asked, "You asked me to appoint you the god of your village and as a village god, you should have brought benefit to your family. But why did your grandsons die one after another?"

The village god replied, "I had left my home village for too long. I was only too happy to come home. My fellow villagers offered me much wine and food as sacrifice. I missed my grandsons so much that I summoned them to keep company with me."

Hearing this, the lord dismissed his father from his post at once and had another person to take his place. The ghost father walked out tearfully. Humu Ban took leave of the god. His later-born sons lived healthy lives.

### Tale 13. The Tomb of Three Kings

Gangjiang Moye, a famous sword maker in the state of Chu, took three years to forge swords for the king of Chu. Believing that Moye had procrastinated in making the swords for him, the king was very angry and decided to kill him. Gangjiang Moye had made a pair of swords for the king, one a male sword and the other a female one. One day he said to his wife, who was going to have a baby, "It has taken me three years to forge this pair of swords. The king must be angry with me and is certain to kill me when I present the swords to him. If you give birth to a son, tell him when he grows up: 'Go outside the house, look towards the southern hill, and you will see growing from a rock a pine tree with a sword behind it.'"

Gangjiang Moye hid the male sword and went only with the female one to the palace. In anger, the king ordered a close examination of the sword. The examiner said, "It should be a pair of swords. This is only the female sword and he hasn't brought the male one." In a fit of rage, the king killed Moye on the spot.

Moye's wife gave birth to a son, named Chibi. The boy soon grew into manhood. One day, he asked her mother, "Where is my father?" She told him: "Your father took three years to forge swords for the king of Chu. The king requited kindness with enmity and killed your father. Before your father left home, he bade me to tell you to go out of the house, look towards the southern hill, and look for a pine tree growing from a rock. You will find a sword behind the tree."

Chibi went outside to look southward as instructed, but he saw no hills in that direction. What came into his view was a pine wood pillar on a stone seat opposite the hall. He cleaved the stone seat with an axe and took out the male sword.

Since then, Chibi sought his revenge by all means. The king dreamed of a teenager boy with eyebrows one foot apart from each other who kept on saying "Avenge, avenge!" Terrified at what he had seen in the dream, the king offered a reward of one thousand taels of gold for the boy's head. Chibi had to flee for his life.

Chibi sang sad songs all the time while roving the hills and mountains. One day, a stranger met him and said, "You're so young. Why are you crying so pitifully?"

"I'm Gangjiang Moye's son," Chibi answered. "The king of Chu killed my father and I am going to avenge him."

"It's said that the king has offered a reward of one thousand taels of gold for your head. Give me your head and your sword, and I will avenge you."

"Thank you!" He drew his sword and killed himself. Standing stiff, he presented his head and his sword to the man.

"I won't let you down," said the stranger. After he took over the chopped-off head and sword, Chibi's body tumbled to the ground.

The man presented Chibi's head to the king of Chu. The king was pleased. The man said, "This is a head of a warrior, so it's quite different from heads of ordinary people. We need a big seething cauldron to boil it." The king had a cauldron brought into the palace immediately.

Three days and nights passed but Chibi's head remained almost the same as before. What's more, the head occasionally rose high above the boiling water with eyes wide open in anger. The stranger said, "The boy's head will not decompose until Your Majesty comes over to have a look at it." The king agreed, but when the king went up to the cauldron, the stranger drew the male sword. Instantly, the king's head was cut off and fell into the cauldron. The stranger then killed himself with the sword. Now nobody could tell one head from the other, for the three heads had soon melted away in the boiling water. The soup and flesh were then divided into three portions and buried in Yichen County north of Runan in a tomb, which is generally known as 'The Tomb of Three Kings'.



#### Tale 14. Liang Fu

Liang Fu, a native of Xindu County of Guanghan Prefecture, also named Liang Hanru, lived in the Later Han Dynasty. He was made assistant governor when he was young and had never taken any bribes in any forms. As a high official, he attended to everything personally and carefully and enjoyed great popularity and high reputation in the prefecture.

In the summer of one year, there was a severe drought. The governor went out to the courtyard and stood in the scorching sunlight to pray for rain but all his efforts were of no avail. Liang Fu offered to exercise all his official capacity to pray to the gods and deities of mountains and rivers for rain. He swore to them, "As chief assistant to the governor, I have failed to provide the governor with good advice and admonition and failed to recommend to him virtuous men and help dismiss the evil ones in his efforts to build up a harmonious relationship with the people. My negligence and malfeasance have resulted in the separating of Heaven from Earth, the withering of all the plants under the sun and the thirsting of men for rain as fish on dry land for water. The people, however, don't know where and to whom to complain about their sufferings. For all this, nobody but me is to blame. The governor took the blame for me and punished himself by being exposed to the burning hot sun in the courtyard, while instructing me to apologise on his behalf to the gods and spirits and to plead with them to bestow blessings upon his people. His self-sacrifice and sincerity can't move the hearts of the gods and spirits. I swear to you that I'll kill myself to atone for all the faults and mistakes caused by my negligence if the rain refuses to fall by noon."

By noon, dark clouds were seen rising from the mountains and quickly blotting out the sun. And soon came from afar roars of thunders and storms. In no time, the dry land was soaked in water, and Liang Fu has since then been remembered for his loyalty and sincerity.

#### Tale 15. Ding's Wife

Aunt Ding, a woman of Quanjiao County, Huanan Prefecture, daughter of the Ding family in Danyang County, was married at the age of 16, to a member of a Xie family in Quanjiao County. Her mother-in-law was extremely hard on her, forcing her to do heavy work, allowing her not a moment of rest. Once she failed to complete the task, her mother-in-law would give her a good flogging. Unable to bear the maltreatment, on the seventh day of the ninth month of one year, she hanged herself.

However, her soul was not gone with her death, and soon made its presence felt in the area. She appeared in the dreams of shamans, instructing them to "Show pity on those women who have to work all year around without a single day off from their hard labour. From now on, let them do no work on the seventh day of the ninth month of every year, so they can have a good rest." Sometimes, she revealed herself in human form, wearing light green clothes and a blue scarf and followed by a maid-servant.

One day, accompanied by his maid, Aunt Ding came to the ferry site of Niuzhujin, intending to cross the Yangzi River. On the river near the bank, two men were fishing in a boat. She went over to ask for a ferry. Smiling and grimacing, they began to flirt with her, saying, "If you agree to be our wife, we'll ferry you across the river."

"I thought you were good men and never expected you were so ignorant. If you are a man, I condemn you to die in the mud; if you are a ghost, I condemn you to be drowned to death in the water," said Aunt Ding. Then she turned around and walked into the tall grasses on the riverside.

A moment later, there came an old man punting a reed-loaded boat. Aunt Ding went outside and asked him to ferry her across.

The old man said, "This is a roofless boat. How can I bear to have you in my boat without anything to protect you from the hot sun?"

"It doesn't matter," said Ding.

So the old man removed half of his reeds to make room for her and then ferried her to the southern bank of the river. Before she went on her way, Aunt Ding said to the old man, "I'm no human but a ghost. I could have crossed the river by myself without being ferried. But I chose to make my power and presence felt. You're so kind to have removed the reeds to put me up in your boat. I'm feeling quite shameful and grateful. I'll repay your kindness. Please go home right now and you'll find the reward I've prepared for you."

The old man poled his boat back to the western bank and found two men dead in the water, facing downwards. Sailing on a few more *li* along the bank, he found a great amount of fish blown to the bank by the river wind, flopping there in the water. The old man removed all of the reeds and came back with a baotful of fish.

She returned to settle down in her hometown, where she was respectfully referred to as Aunt Ding. Every year on the seventh day of the ninth month, women didn't have to do any work because that day was observed as a day for rest. Even today, women in the area south of the Yangzi River still enshrine and worship her.

#### Tale 16. An Old Fox of Wuxing

In the Jin dynasty there lived a man in Wuxing, who had two sons. One day, when the two young men were working in the fields, their father came over to scold and beat them. When they returned home, they complained to their mother, who asked her husband for an explanation. The man was surprised and decided that it must have been a ghost or spirit making mischief. So he gave an order to his two sons to kill the ghost once it came again. But the ghost did not reappear after then.

Afraid of the ghost doing harm to his sons, the man went to the fields to check for himself. Mistaking their father for the ghost, his sons killed him with their hoes and buried him in the fields. The ghost then disguised itself as the father, went to his house and said to his wife, "Our sons have already killed the ghost." When the two young men came home from the fields at dusk, the whole family congratulated each other on slaying the ghost. For quite a few years, none of them had any suspicions about the ghost father.

Later, a Daoist priest came by and said to the two sons, "Your father looks evil." They went in and told their father. The ghost flew into a great fury at the words. The two sons went outside with an order from the father to drive away the priest. Chanting incantations, the priest rushed into the house. The moment he came in, the father turned into an old fox, scurrying under a bed. The two sons hauled it out and killed it on the spot. Only then did they realise that they had killed their father in the fields with their hands. With great regret, the two sons put on mourning apparel and held a funeral for their father. After that, one son took his own life, and the other died in deep sorrow soon after.

#### Tale 17. Li Ji

Mt. Rongling in the Min-Yue area stood as high as dozens of *li*. To its northwest stretched humid lowlands, which were haunted by a serpent, about eight *zhang* long, with a body so thick that ten men were needed to get their arms around it. To the local people, the snake had been the bane of their life. Many of the officials of Dong Ye County and their subordinates had lost their lives in its mouth. The monster would never stop preying on people unless they offered it lambs and oxen in sacrifice.

The monster appeared sometimes in a layman's dream, sometimes in a sorcerer's dream, demanding virgins of around twelve years old. Scared by its demands, the officials and their subordinates were on tenterhooks all day long. The snake then became even more aggravated. In order to placate the monster, every year the officials had to look for a girl born of a slave or a criminal's family and bring her back and keep her until the first day of the eighth month when she was sent to the snake's cave entrance as sacrifice. The monster then crawled out and gulped her down. The annual sacrificial offering was carried on for years on end, with nine girls swallowed by the serpent.

One year, the time came again for the officials to look for a girl for the monster, but they had not found one yet. Li Tan, a native of Jiangle County had six children, all girls. Li Ji, their youngest daughter, volunteered to offer herself as sacrifice, but her parents did not agree. She said to her parents, "although you're unfortunate not to have a son but to have six daughters, a family with no sons is no better than one without children at all. I'm no match for Ti Yin, who atoned for her father. I just stay at home doing nothing but consuming your food and clothes, not to mention supporting you. Since I am of no use to you when alive, it would be better for me to die. Now if you sell me, you can get some money to support yourselves. Can you come up with an idea better than this?" Her parents were deeply touched by what she said. They were even more reluctant to part with their youngest daughter now. But Li Ji had made up her mind. So she went to sign up without telling her parents. Unable to change the given fact, they had to cave in to her decision. Li Ji asked her parents for a sword and a snake-biting dog and then set out with them.

That was the first day of the eighth month of the year. After she arrived at the temple dedicated to the snake, Li Ji put the glutinous rice mixed with honey at the entrance to the cave. Sure enough, the monster crawled out for the food. Its head was as big as a wheat barn, with eyes as big as a two feet wide large bronze mirror, flashing malicious light. Smelling the sweet honey, the devil put out its head and gobbled up the rice cakes. Seeing its head sticking out of the cave, Li Ji released the dog. The dog rushed on to snap at its head while Li Ji ran round to chop at its body with the sword. The snake struggled to crawl out into the courtyard of the temple and died.

Li Ji went into the cave and found the bones of the nine girls. She took the bones out of the cave. "You were so timid that you were swallowed by the snake. What a pity!" She gave a long sigh and then walked home calmly and unhurriedly.

After hearing of her slaying the serpent, the king of Yue made Li Ji his queen. He appointed Li Ji's father magistrate of the county and also granted a handsome reward to her mother and her sisters. From then on, Dong Ye area was no more haunted by ghosts and monsters. Ballads praising Li Ji's slaying the snake were handed down from one generation to another.

#### Tale 18. The Goddess of the White River

Xie Duan was a native of Houguan in Jin'an. When he was very young, his parents died, so there were no relatives to look after him. One of his neighbours took the child home and brought him up. The boy soon grew into a respectful, modest and self-disciplined young man and never did anything immoral or illegal. At seventeen or eighteen, he left his neighbour's home and began to live on his own. His neighbours sympathised with him and tried to find a wife for him but failed.

Xie Duan stayed up late at night and got up early in the morning all year round, working hard in the fields from dawn till dusk. One day near his village, he found a snail as big as a three-litre kettle. He took it home as a rarity and kept it in a water jar for a couple of weeks. In the days that followed, he left for the fields early in the morning as usual but returned always to find a meal already prepared, boiled water kept warm in a jar and a fire burning in the stove. It seemed that somebody had done all this for him. "It must be my neighbour", he thought to himself. So he went over to express gratitude, but his neighbour said, "I have done nothing for you. How can I deserve your thankfulness?"

Xie Duan believed that his neighbour must have misunderstood his intention this time. A few more days passed, with the same thing happening to him. Xie Duan went over again to ask his neighbour who had done all this for him. His neighbour laughed, saying, "You have got a wife for yourself and kept her at home to cook meals for you. Why come to thank me for doing that for you?"

Xie Duan couldn't find an answer, although he had a suspicion that something mysterious had been going on in his house these days.

One day Xie Duan went to the fields at cockcrow as usual but he returned earlier in secret. Crouching behind the fence, he peeped into his house and saw a young lady walk out of the water jar to the kitchen to make a fire in the cooking stove. He entered the house without hesitation and walked straight to the jar only to find an empty shell there. So he went into the kitchen. "Where do you come from and why do you cook for me?" Xie asked.

Taken aback by his sudden appearance, the lady tried to retreat to the jar. Seeing her way blocked, she could not but reveal her real identity, saying, "I am the goddess of the White River in the Milky Way. The Heavenly Emperor takes pity on you because you lost your parents at an early age and because you are a man of virtue. So he instructed me to come down to help keep house and cook meals for you. I'll stay here until ten years later when you are rich enough to take a wife. But now that you have spied on me for no good reason and my real identity has been exposed to you, I have to leave you right away. Although I can no longer help you, you'll be better off in the future if you continue to work hard in the fields, fish in the rivers and hunt in the mountains. I'll leave this shell here for you to store rice in. You'll never find it empty of grain."

Xie Duan pleaded again and again with her not to leave him, but she said that she had to. Suddenly there came a great storm, into which she disappeared. After she left, Xie Duan built a temple for her and made regular sacrificial offerings. Before long, he became quite better off and lived a happy-go-lucky life although he could not be considered a man of great wealth. Then one of his neighbours married off his

daughter to him. Later, he was made a county magistrate. Even today, the temple dedicated to the goddess of the Milky Way still stands in the county.

#### Tale 19. Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao

In the fifth year of the reign of Emperor Ming Di of the Han Dynasty, Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao, both natives of Shan County, went together to Mt. Tiantai to look for bark trees for making paper. But they lost their way home. Thirteen days later with their food running out, they were starving. They looked into the distance and saw a peach tree with fruit hanging heavy on it. The tree, which grew from a steep cliff across a deep and narrow ravine, seemed to be totally inaccessible. With great difficulty, they climbed up the vines hand over hand. After eating some of the peaches, they immediately felt full and energetic again.

They went downhill to a stream at the foot of the mountain and ladled out water with a mug to wash their faces and rinse their mouths. At that moment, some fresh and green vegetable leaves flowing down the stream from the deep mountain came into their sight. Then there came floating on the water a cup with rice and sesame in it. "Now we're not far away from a way home," they said to each other. They walked into the water, waded upstream for a couple of *li* and found themselves away from the mountain in a great river. Two beautiful ladies stood by the water to meet them. "Mr. Liu and Mr. Ruan, so you've come to bring us the cup we've just lost." Although they knew nothing of the two ladies, Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao were very happy to be treated as old acquaintances when they heard their names called correctly. "What has prevented you coming earlier?" the two ladies asked them and then invited them to their home.

The house was roofed with bronze tiles and against the southern and eastern walls stood two big beds, with scarlet mosquito nets hanging over them. The four corners of the net were festooned with gold and silver bells. Ten maidservants had been called in to stand by the bedside. "Mr. Liu and Mr. Ruan have walked a long way in the mountain. They must be tired though they have had some luscious peaches from the tree. Make them a meal quickly." The two ladies said to the servants.

Soon a delicious meal of sesamed rice, dried mutton, and beef was laid out on a table in front of them. After the rice bowls were emptied, wine was brought to the table. They were drinking with great relish when a group of women came in, each holding three or five peaches in the hands. They smiled while saying to the two ladies, "Congratulations on the arrival of your bridegrooms." Drinking and laughing, all were intoxicated in the happy atmosphere except Liu and Ruan, who felt more and more uneasy. When night fell, they were asked to go to bed, each accompanied with a lady, whose soft and sweet voices soon drove away all the worries from their heart.

Ten days later, they asked to go home. The two ladies said, "It's your predetermined good luck that has brought you here. How can you think of leaving us?" They then stayed on for half a year. It was spring now. With the arrival of spring, birds came flying, singing songs on the green-turning trees, which made them more and more homesick. So they kept imploring to be allowed to leave for home. "Since you can't break away with your worldly cares," said the two ladies, "what else can we do with you?" They called together dozens of women to play music to send Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao off on the way home.

They went out of the mountain and came home only to find that their families, relatives and friends, all had died long before. Their home village and houses had changed beyond recognition and nobody in the village knew who they were. They inquired door to door and finally learnt from their descendants that six generations had passed and about them there was a legend passing from the older generations that two of their remote ancestors had left for the mountain and lost their way home and never returned.

In the eighth year of the Taiyuan Period of the Jin Dynasty, Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao left home again and this time nobody knew where they went.

#### Tale 20. From Wild Cat into Woman

During the Sima Yi period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, there was a man who was extremely filial to his parents. When his mother died, the filial man was very poor and could not afford a funeral for her, so he carried her coffin into a remote mountain, where he built a hut of grass and kept vigil beside the coffin day and night without a moment's break.

One day at dusk, a woman carrying a baby in her arms came along. She asked for accommodation. When night fell, the woman complained time and again that she was too tired to stay up any longer. Soon



the woman fell asleep by a fire, although the filial son had not finished his daily mourning rites. A moment later, he came over to have a look but there was nothing of the woman by the fire except a wild cat holding a black chicken to its chest. Without thinking further, the filial man killed the cat, and threw it into a pit behind his hut.

The next day, a man came to his place.

"My wife left home yesterday and stopped in your place for the night," said the man, "but where is she now?"

"Only a wild cat came by and I've killed it."

"So where is its body?"

The filial man led him to the pit but unexpectedly, he found no cat but a woman lying dead and stiff in the pit. He was then tied up, taken to court and sentenced to death for murdering.

"I killed a wild cat, not a woman. If you let out a hunting dog, you can force it to reveal its true colours," said the filial man to the county magistrate.

The magistrate called in a hunter.

"Can a hunting dog tell a man from a wild cat?" asked the magistrate.

"Cats usually have a dread of dogs, but I'm afraid dogs can't tell whether it's a cat or not," answered the hunter.

Then a dog was brought in. At the sight of the dog, the man instantly was frightened into an old cat. The hunter killed it with his arrow on the spot. When they turned to look at the dead body of the woman, it had transformed into a wide cat.

#### Tale 21. The Lad Who Bought Powder

A man of great wealth had only one son, to whom he was extremely devoted. One day, the son of the rich family was wandering along the street when he saw a girl selling powder. The girl was so beautiful that he at once fell in love with her, but he did not know how to express his feelings. From then on, he went to her stall every day on the pretext of buying powder, and once he paid for the powder, he would leave without a word. By and by, the girl began to suspect his intentions. When he came in again for the powder, the girl asked him, "You've bought so much powder. What use is it for you?"

"I fell in love with you when I first met you," said the young man, "but I dare not tell you my feelings. I want to see you so much I've made an pretence of coming to buy powder."

The girl was deeply moved, and promised to go to his place in secret the following evening. The young man had his bedroom well arranged for the girl to come. Sure enough, the girl arrived at dusk. His heart swelling with great happiness, he held the girl in his arms, saying, "Today, my long-cherished wish comes true at last." He could not help jumping in joy but suddenly he fell on the ground, dead. Dumbfounded, the girl was at a loss. She fled the house in hurry and, at daybreak, returned to her powder stall.

The next day, when the time came for lunch, the young man did not turn up. Feeling strange, his parents went inside his room only to find him already dead.

In preparing a funeral for their son, the parents opened his box and found in it more than one hundred packs of powder, which came in different size but were wrapped all in the same way. The mother said, "It must be the powder that killed our son." They immediately went to street in search of the powder. When they came by the girl's powder stall, they found the powder here packed in the same way as that found in their son's box. They caught the girl and asked, "Why did you kill our son?" With tears running down her cheeks, the girl sobbed out the whole story. The parents, however, did not believe her and took her to court, charging her with murdering their son.

"Do you believe that I fear death?" said the girl to the county magistrate, "I have nothing to wish for in this world but permission for you to have a last look at him to express my grief over his death."

The magistrate gave his consent to her request. The girl hurried to the place where the dead body rested. Putting her hand on the body, she cried loudly. In a voice choked with sobs, she said, "I had never expected our love to end in such a way. If your soul remains alive with your body, and can hear me wailing over your death, I will have nothing to regret in this world."

All of a sudden, the son of the rich family came back to life, and he told all present what had happened to him. Later, they got married and had many children.

## Tale 22. Guang, a Native of Yuhang

Towards the end of Shengping Period of the Jin Dynasty, there was an old man in the county of Guozheng, who lived with his only daughter in a remote mountain. A man named Guang from Yuhang County proposed marriage to his daughter through many go-betweens, but the old man refused them all.

Later the old man died of illness. In order to buy a coffin for her father, the daughter left home. On the way, she ran into Guang and told him of her father's death.

"I can't manage the funeral myself. If you could come to help manage it," she said to Guang, "I will marry you after I return home from the town."

Guang agreed to help without any reluctance.

"There's a pig in the pigsty," said the girl, "and you can kill it to entertain those who come to your assistance."

When he came near to her house, Guang heard a noisy crowd applauding and dancing in the hall. He peeped through a crevice in the wattled wall and saw a group of ghosts poking fun at each other over the corpse of the old man. With a club in hand, Guang rushed inside shouting at the top of his voice. In no time, the ghosts had all fled from the house in terror.

While keeping vigil over the corpse, Guang had the pig killed. At night, there suddenly appeared from under the corpse an old ghost, who held out his hand to Guang for a piece of meat. Guang caught the ghost by the arm before it ran away. The ghost struggled desperately to free himself but in vain. Then a group of ghosts came and stood around the house. "It serves you right, you old glutton!" they shouted at the old ghost.

"You must have caused the old man to die," Guang said to the ghost. "I won't let go of your hand unless you give back his soul. If you dare to say 'no', you'll never be able to leave the house alive."

"It's my son who has put him to death," the ghost said and then turned to call out to his son who was standing outside the house, "Return the old man's soul quickly!" Soon life came back to the old man's dead body. Guang then set the old ghost free.

A couple of days later, the girl returned home with a coffin for her father. When she saw his father come back to life, she was quite happy. In gratitude, she married Guang.

## Tale 23. A Native of Fuyang

In the first few years of the Yuan Jia Period of the State of Song, there lived a man named Wang. He made a basket of thin bamboo strips to catch crabs in an out-of-the-way pond. At dawn, he went to the pond only to find no crabs in the basket and just a wooden club, about two feet long, lying across it, and several of the bamboo strips had been broken. He mended the basket and threw the club on the riverbank. The next day, when he went there again, he found the cudgel stuck in the basket and the basket torn as before. Wang mended it again and threw the club away. On the morning of the following day, when he arrived there, he found the same thing had happened to his crab basket. Suspecting the club of making mischief, he caught it and put it into his basket. Tying the basket to one end of his shoulder pole, he carried it on his back and set out for home. He decided to burn the club up after he got home.

When he had walked to a place three *li* from his house, Wang heard a strange noise coming from behind, so he looked back inside the basket and found the club had transformed into a monster with a human face and a monkey body, moving on one hand and one foot.

"I was born with a special taste for crabs," said the monster. "I cannot resist the temptation of sneaking into the water to tear up your basket and eat up the crabs in it. I'm very sorry and I beg your forgiveness. Please open the basket and let me go. I am a mountain deity and I shall bless you with a great catch of crabs."

However, Wang just turned a deaf ear to its request.

"Can I have your family name? And what's your first name?" The monster asked him again and again but Wang made no reply at all.

When Wang was coming nearer and nearer to his house, the monster said, "You won't set me free, nor will you tell me your name. What else can I do with you? My doom is sealed."

When he got home, Wang burnt the monster to death in a raging flame. From then on no more strange things disturbed people in that area.



The monster was called the mountain elf. It was said that once the devil got to know your name, it would haunt you and bring disasters to you by tricks. That's why it asked Wang's name incessantly. The mountain elf did so with the wicked intention of putting Wang to death and setting itself free.

#### Tale 24. Huang Miao

In the Yuanjia Period of the Kingdom of Song, there was a man named Huang Miao of Pinggu County of Nankang Prefecture, who served as a junior officer in the prefecture. Once he went home for holiday and overstayed his leave. On the way back, he passed by Gongting Lake. He stopped at the Gongting Temple and walked in to pray to the temple god for an exemption from punishment for his overstay and also for permission to go home again for holiday. He vowed to come back to offer wine and meat to the temple if his two wishes were fulfilled.

Soon after he came back from his holiday, much beyond his expectation, his two wishes came true one by one. So he immediately set out for home. Because he had not brought much money with him, he passed by the temple without making any sacrificial offerings as he had promised. When he arrived at the edge of the prefecture, he stopped over for the night with his boat berthed close to other boats. At midnight, his boat suddenly began of its own accord to drift as fast as the wind down the river. Before daybreak, the boat had reached the Guanting Temple, which reminded him of the vow he had made to the god last time. Three men in black appeared and tied up Huang Miao with ropes and took him to the stone steps leading up to the temple. Huang Miao looked up and saw in the temple a golden-faced god in embroidered garment, about forty years old, sitting there. Hanging from the beam was a bright pearl as big as a pellet, illuminating the hall brilliantly. Standing outside of the temple, a man reported to the god: "Huang Miao, a native of Pinggu, promised to make sacrificial offerings but failed to keep his word. And what's more, he intended to sneak home by making a detour around the temple. Now he has been caught and brought in for trial." The golden-faced god gave an order to have him dismissed from his post and sent into exile for three years to prey on thirty people to atone for his sins.

After that, the god had Huang Miao exiled to a remote mountain. Tied to a tree with a chain around his waist, Huang Miao was fed with raw meat every day. Distraught and distressed, he suddenly felt cold one minute and felt hot the next, and then began to ulcerate all over with spotted fur growing from his body. Ten days later, hair draped all over his body, and he turned into a cannibal with sharp fangs and claws. The temple runners untied the chain and set him free.

The following three years saw twenty-nine people killed by Huang Miao. The last one to be caught by him was a girl in Xin'gan County. Well-bred and well-educated, the girl had never left home alone. One day she went outside to visit one of her relatives with her sisters. As she was walking out of the backdoor, Huang Miao rushed upon her from behind. The girl was so difficult to catch that it took him five rather than three years to get all thirty people.

After that he was taken back to the temple and the golden-faced god ordered him released. The temple runners immediately brought him a bowl of salted rice and he ate it up. As the fur fell off his body, he soon grew hair on the top of his head, and around his jaw. At the same time, his sharp fangs and claws dropped off and teeth and fingernails grew in their place. Fifteen days later, Huang Miao was transformed back into himself and his state of mind returned to normal. At last, the temple god set him back on the main road.

After hearing of the strange things that had happened to him, the magistrate asked Huang Miao to write down the details. In order to check the number of people who had fallen victim to him, an inquiry was made from door to door, and the result proved his story to be true to the facts. A halberd once wounded Huang Miao's thigh and the scar remained there. Eight years after he returned him, he died of an epidemic disease.

#### Tale 25. Xu Tiejiu

During the Song period of the Six Dynasties, a man named Xu lived in Donghai County. His wife died soon after she gave birth to a son named Tiejiu which means "Iron Mortar". Later he married a cold-blooded woman named Chen, who hated her stepson so much that she intended to put him to death. One day she swore to her own new-born son, "You won't be my son if you can't get rid of Tiejiu." Chen had

named her baby Tiechu which means "Iron Pestle" in the hope of being able to poke Tiejiu to death with her Tiechu. She was always finding fault with Tiejiu and often beat him black and blue. What's more, she tortured her stepson by starving him and forcing him to stand naked on the snowy ground. His father Xu was a muddle-headed, spineless man. He was most of his time away from home for business, so Chen could ill-treat Tiejiu at will during his absence. Cold, hungry and beaten day after day, Tiejiu died at the age of 16.

About ten days after he died, the ghost of the boy unexpectedly returned home and climbed into Chen's bed. "It's me, Tiejiu," the ghost said to Chen. "I had done nothing wrong, but you were so cruel to me and tortured me to death. My mother has brought a charge against you in the Heavenly Court. Now I've come with an arrest warrant to bring Tiechu to justice. He will suffer as much as I did at your hands. It has been decided when he is to be taken away from you. I'm here just to wait for the time to come."

The ghost's voice sounded the same as that of Tiejiu when alive. Strangely enough, the family members and their guests and friends could hear the ghost speaking but none of them could see him with their eyes. From then on, the ghost of Tiejiu settled down on the beam of the house. Scared out of her wits, Chen knelt down to beg forgiveness, while slapping her own face. She presented the ghost with wine and food as sacrificial offerings.

"You needn't do that now. You have starved me to death. Do you think one meal of food can make up for the starvation I suffered in my life?" The ghost said coldly.

One night when Chen whispered about the ghost, a harsh voice stopped her, "How dare you call me bad names behind my back? Now I'll saw your beam into two."

Sure enough, there came immediately the noise of the ghost sawing the beam. Soon the sawed wood scraps fell fluttering in profusion from above. Suddenly there came a crack as if the beam had broken off. All the people inside fled for their lives from the house. A while later, they came back into the house only to find the beam intact in the candlelight. Then the ghost began to curse Tiechu, "I died just because of you, but now you stay at home, living a life free of cares and worries. Do you think you will be able to continue enjoying your life like this? I'll have the house burnt down."

No sooner had the ghost's voice settled down than the house was set on fire, thick smoke rising from it. The whole family was plunged into great panic, totally at a loss what to do. But a moment later, the fire died out of its own accord, the thatched roof remaining the same as before. The ghost cursed them all day long in the house, and when the ghost stopped cursing, he would sing a song, which went like this:

Peach flowers, plum flowers,  
You're utterly helpless  
When attacked by frosts!

Peach flowers, plum flowers,  
Attacked by frosts,  
You die youngsters!

The ghost sang the song in such a heart-stirring way as if lamenting the early death of Tiejiu.

Tiechu had grown into a boy of six when the ghost came to haunt the house. After the ghost's arrival, he fell ill, aching all over. Feeling bloated with gastric air, he lost all his appetite for food. The ghost often flogged him black and blue. Tiechu died soon: since his death, the house has been no longer haunted.

#### Tale 26. Hou Yu

In the first few years of the Kaihuang Period of the Sui Dynasty, there was a scholar named Hou Yu, a native of Guangdu. One day, he went to Jianmen, and just outside the city gate, found four stones all as large as *dou*. Attracted by their size and shape, he picked up the stones and put them into his book basket carried by his donkey. When they stopped for a rest, Hou Yu took them out for a close look, but, much to his delight, he found that they all had turned into gold. After he entered the town, he sold the gold at the market for a great sum of money. With the money, he brought dozens of beautiful girls at the market and

had his house and courtyard renovated and expanded. He later bought himself a villa and a large stretch of fertile fields on the outskirts of the town.

One day, Hou Yu went out of town in a horse-drawn carriage on a spring outing, accompanied by all of his concubines. After they got off the carriage, a rich feast of wine, meat and fish was served on a table. They were enjoying the meal when unexpectedly an old man carrying a big book basket on his back came to sit at the table. Hou Yu was very angry. He cursed the old man and ordered his servants to drive him away. The old man sat and helped himself to the food and wine calmly as if nobody was around. After having a full glass of warmed-up wine, he said with a smile, "I'm here to ask you to pay off your debts to me. Do you remember that you've taken away my gold?" After saying this, he seized all of Hou's concubines, put them into his book basket, which suddenly became large enough to hold them all in. He carried the basket on his back and walked away as fast as a flying bird. Hou Yu ordered his men to mount their horses to chase after him, but the old man had gone out of sight.

From that day on, Hou Yu's family fortunes began to decline and by and by were reduced to their former state. Years later, Hou Yu resigned his post and planned to return to his hometown in Sichuan. When he arrived at Jianmen, Hou Yu came across the old man, followed by many attendants, strolling leisurely through the street with the concubines taken away from him years ago. At the sight of Hou Yu walking along, they all laughed at him. When Hou asked why they laughed, they made no reply. Before Hou could get close to them, they suddenly disappeared from sight. Hou Yu then made a door-to-door inquiry in Jianmen area about the old man's whereabouts but to no avail.

#### Tale 27. Yang Bao

Yang Bao, a native of Lüjiang County, once made a visit to one of his closest friends. His friend was very poor and he could not afford to entertain Yang Bao with a decent meal. As a last resort, he decided to kill his only dog in order to be able to cook a meal. The dog knelt down on its front legs and stared at Yang Bao in despair. Feeling sympathy with the dog, Yang Bao asked his friend not to kill it but let him take the dog home. He then left his friend with the dog. In the following months, Yang Bao would have the dog to keep him company no matter where he went.

Now Yang's wife had a lover but he was kept in the dark about it. One year later, his wife plotted with her paramour to murder her husband.

One evening when she saw Yang Bao come home blind drunk, she called over her lover at once. They were about to enter his room when suddenly the dog sprang at the man. The dog broke his foot with a fierce bite and then sprang at the woman. Both of them were seriously wounded. When his neighbours came to his help, Yang Bao had sobered up from his drunkenness. He searched his wife and her lover, and found a knife in the man's clothes. They took them to court. The woman confessed their crimes and the county magistrate sentenced them to death.

#### Tale 28. Madam Three at Ban Bridge

In the Tang Dynasty, there was an inn at Ban Bridge to the west of Bianzhou. The innkeeper was Madam Three, a woman in her thirties, and nobody knew where she came from. She was quite rich, owning a lot of houses and donkeys. She had neither children nor relatives and lived all by herself selling porridge and cakes. Every day, many carts and carriages passed by her inn. Besides selling porridge and cakes, she also provided cheap accommodation for those passengers who could not get to their destination before the sun set. She tried every means to cater for the needs of her guests and the reputation of her inn soon spread across the country.

During the Yuanhe period, a passenger from Xuzhou named Zhao Jihe was journeying eastwards to Luoyang. He stopped at Ban Bridge for the night. Six or seven passengers who were in the inn already had occupied the beds near the door, so Zhao Jihe had to sleep at the furthest corner of the room in a bed placed closely against the wall. On the other side of wall was the innkeeper's bedroom. The guests were well looked after and Madam Three stayed up late that night, drinking, talking and laughing with her guests. Zhao Jihe did not taste a single drop of wine — in fact, he never drank — nor did he utter a single word. By early the next morning, all of the guests had got dead drunk and fallen into a sound sleep except Zhao Jihe, who found himself unable to close his eyes.

When her guests had fallen asleep, Madam Three walked to her room, closed the door behind her and blew out the oil lamp. Zhao Jihe was tossing and turning in bed when suddenly he heard a succession of slight sounds coming from the other side of the wall as if somebody was moving things. He peeped through a crack in the wall into the room and saw Madam Three walking over to a box. She lit a lamp, and in the lamplight, she took out from the box a wooden plough, a wooden ox and a wooden figurine, all six or seven *cun* high. She put them all in front of the cooking stove and sprinkled water on them. The next moment, the wooden figurine and ox began to move like real men and oxen. Leading the ox with one hand and holding the plough with the other, the figurine began to plough the floor in front of the bed. Madam Three took out a sack of buckwheat seeds for the figurine to sow in the ploughed soil. Instantly the buckwheat sprang into sprouts, which, within a blink of the eyes, blossomed into flowers and ripened for harvest. Madam Three had the figurine gather in the crops. Having had the crops threshed and hulled, she had seven or eight *sheng* of buckwheat. She then had millstones fixed in place in order to grind the buckwheat into flour. After putting the figurine, the wooden ox and plough back into the box, she began to make cakes out of the flour. At cockcrow when her guests were about to go on their journey, Madam Three got up, lit the lamp and put the pancakes on the plate to serve them for breakfast.

Confused and frightened, Zhao Jihe did not eat the cakes. Instead, he opened the door and sneaked out to peep into the room through a window. The other guests rose out of bed, and sat at the table for breakfast. But before getting down their first mouthful of the pancakes, they all tumbled down to the ground, and suddenly turned into braying donkeys. Madam Three drove them into her backyard, and all of their belongings thus fell into her hands.

Zhao Jihe did not reveal her secret to anyone else. Privately, he greatly admired her magic trick. Over a month later, Zhao Jihe came back from Luoyang. On the way, he prepared some buckwheat pancakes of the same size as those made by Madam Three. When he got to the inn at Ban Bridge, he was well received at the inn just as he had been previously. That night, there were no guests except Zhao Jihe at the inn, so Madam Three entertained him with even more enthusiasm.

At midnight, Madam Three asked Zhao, "What else can I do for you?"

"I'll leave tomorrow morning," said Zhao. "Please prepare me some pastry or something like that."

"No problem. Have a good dream." Madam Three said before she went out of his room.

After midnight, Zhao Jihe peeked into her room through the crack in the wall and saw the same thing happening. When it dawned, Madam Three came in holding a plate with a few pancakes on it. When she went out to fetch something, Zhao Jihe walked over to the plate hurriedly and quickly substituted a cake on the plate with one of the cakes he had prepared. All this happened without her noticing. Before he started on his journey, Zhao said to Madam Three, "It happens that I have got a few cakes of my own left uneaten. Please take your cakes away and keep them for any other guests." He took out the pancakes he had made for himself and began to eat. No sooner had he finished a second one than Madam Three came in with tea for him. "Have a taste of my cakes," he said while handing over to her the cake he had just taken from the plate behind her back. As soon as she had a bit off the cake, she fell over braying and turned into a strong and healthy donkey.

Zhao Jihe mounted it and rode away with all of the magic gadgets like the wooden figurine, ox and plough contained in the box. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not get them to work. The donkey carried Zhao Jihe a hundred *li* a day, roving all over the country and never lost its way.

Four years later, he came upon an old man five or six *li* east of the Huayue Temple as he was riding the donkey through the Shanhai Pass. The old man clapped his hands and said with a big laugh, "Madam Three at Ban Bridge, how have you come to such an ending?" With a hand pulling at the donkey, the old man said to Zhao, "Although she has committed crimes deserving the death penalty, you have given her enough punishment. Please show mercy on her and set her free." Then he tore apart the donkey by the mouth and nose. Madam Three jumped out of the donkey's mouth jumped and instantly came back to her real self. She bowed to the old man and walked away. Nobody knew where she went.

#### Tale 29: Lady Taiyin

Lu Qi was very poor when he was young. At that time, he lived in Luoyang, the Eastern Capital, in a dilapidated, deserted house. One of his neighbours was an old woman called Ma, who lived by herself. One year Lu was seriously ill and bedridden for over a month. During his illness, Ma came over to cook



soup or porridge for him every day. One evening after his recovery, Lu saw on his way back gold-coated ox-drawn carriage pull up in front of Ma's house. Driven by curiosity, he peeped into the carriage, and saw a teenaged girl as beautiful as a goddess sitting in it. The next day he quietly asked the old lady about the girl.

"Do you want to marry her?" Ma asked. "I can talk to her if you want her to be your wife."

"How dare a poor man like me think of that?" Lu answered.

"There is no harm in trying," Ma said. That evening, the old lady told him, "Things are hopeful now! Please stop eating meat and fish for three days, then go to the abandoned temple east of the city, and you will see her waiting for you there."

On the appointed day Lu and Ma went to the temple but there were no signs of human habitation except old trees and wild grass. All of a sudden a storm broke out with thunder and lightning in the sky. In the midst of the storm appeared a magnificent palace with high buildings, pavilions, and curtained windows. A covered coach alighted from the sky. It brought to the presence of Lu the girl he had seen a few days before. When they met, the girl said, "I am a goddess from Heaven. God has ordered me to find a spouse in the human world. There is something immortal in your look, so I asked Ma to convey my wishes to you. Please eat only vegetables for another seven days, and then we will meet again." She called Ma over and gave her two pills. After that she vanished into the thunder, lightning and dark clouds. Around them only the old trees and wild grass remained.

Ma and Lu returned home. Seven days later, they dug a hole in the courtyard and put the pills into it. Vines appeared from the earth immediately, and shortly afterwards two gourds grew on the vines. Gradually they became two big vats, each of which could hold a *hu* of grain. Ma hollowed them out with a knife. She and Lu jumped into the vats with three oiled coats in their hands. Wind and thunder started roaring, and lifted the two gourds up into the sky. They could hear nothing but the sound of waves. When Lu felt cold, Ma told him to put on an oiled coat. But still he felt icy cold. He could not warm himself up until he put on all the three oiled coats. Ma said, "Luoyang is already eighty thousand *li* behind."

A good while later, the gourds stopped flying. Lu saw before him a palace comprising many buildings, all of which had crystal walls, guarded by hundreds of armoured warriors.

Ma ushered Lu into the palace. A young lady, who was being waited on by a hundred maids, walked up to greet them. After they sat down, wine and food were brought to them. But Ma rose from the table and stepped back to stand among the servants. The lady said to him, "There are three choices for you to make. The first is to reside in this palace for ever and enjoy a life as long as Heaven, the second to live a immortal life in the world of mortals and come for a visit if you like, and the last one to be made the prime minister of China."

Lu answered, "I choose to live here."

The girl was pleased, saying, "This is the Crystal Palace, and I am Lady Taiyin, one of the top ranking immortals. You will become an immortal, just by one leap forward, but you must make up your mind. Any change would cause me trouble." She took out a piece of green paper, wrote her petition on it, knelt and bowed in the court. "I must report this to the heavenly god," she said.

A loud voice came from the northeast of the palace: "The divine envoy is approaching." Lady Taiyin and other immortals hurried out to welcome him. Heralded by banners and pennants, a young man in red arrived. Standing on the step, he asked on behalf of God, "Do you, Lu Qi, really want to live in the Crystal Palace, as Lady Taiyin has reported?" Lu kept silent although Lady Taiyin tried hard to urge him to answer the question. She and her attendants were greatly worried about his silence. They rushed into the hall and brought out five bolts of gauze to bribe the envoy into waiting for some more time. The envoy waited until the meal time when he asked Lu again, "Lu Qi, what will you choose — to live in the Crystal Palace, to be an immortal on earth, or to be Prime Minister? Answer!" This time Lu replied in a loud voice, "I want to be made Prime Minister!" Hearing this, the envoy left.

Lady Taiyin turned pale and said, "This is your fault, Ma. Take him back at once!" Lu was pushed into a gourd, and again he heard the sound of wind and waves. It was midnight when he found himself back in his empty house with only a bed covered with dust: the gourd and Ma were nowhere to be seen.

#### Tale 30. Wu Kan

Wu Kan lived by himself in Yixing County, Changzhou Prefecture. He had no brothers and his father died when he was very young. He was later appointed by the county magistrate as a junior officer. He worked extremely hard and with great care. A brook named Jingxi flowing by his house, he made great efforts to protect the brook water from getting dirty. When he came home from work, he would go out to the brook and watch the water flowing with great love and respect. Several years later, he found a white spiral shell by the water. He picked it up and took it home to keep it in a water jar. The next day when he came home from work, he found a meal already prepared. He sat down to enjoy the meal without thinking much. This lasted over ten days. It must have been the old woman next door who had come over to cook meals for him out of sympathy for him being alone. In gratitude, Wu Kan went over to his neighbour with a big thank you.

"Don't say such things. You've got a good woman to do housework for you. Why come to thank me?" The old woman said to him.

"Nothing of the sort," Wu said. "What's all this about?" He asked.

"These days after you've gone to work, I would see a graceful and beautiful girl of about seventeen years old in bright-coloured silk skirts cooking meals for you. When the meal was finished, she would go inside the bedroom," the old woman said.

Suspicious that the white snail was doing the cooking, he said to the old woman secretly, "Tomorrow I'll pretend to go to work as usual. But I'll hide in your place to spy on my house. Would you mind?"

"Not at all!" The old woman said.

The next morning, Wu Kan pretended to go to work. A while after he left home, he saw from the old woman's house a girl walking out of his bedroom into the kitchen to prepare a meal. Wu suddenly rushed in before the girl had time to withdraw into the bedroom. Wu Kan went up and bowed to her.

"Heaven knows that you have great respect for the brook and have made great efforts to protect the water from being polluted, and also knows that you've worked hard at your modest post," the lady said. "Feeling sorry for your being alone, the Heavenly Emperor sent me down from Heaven to keep you company and look after you. I hope you can understand me and do not suspect me."

Wu Kan was at once filled with gratitude and respect for the goddess. They then become husband and wife and began to live a happy life.

The news that Wu Kan has got a beautiful wife soon spread across the county. The county magistrate and other wealthy and powerful men were very envious of Wu and plotted to take the goddess from him. Wu was quite diligent and careful in performing his duty and it was hard to find a fault with him. One day, the magistrate said to Wu Kan, "You're well aware of your duties. Today I ask you to get me two things: a toad's hair and a ghost's arm. You must send them to me no later than this evening. If you fail your duty, you'll be severely punished."

Wu Kan accepted the task obediently and took leave of the county magistrate. There was no way of getting these two things because there were no such things in this world. Worried and depressed, he came home and told to his wife.

"I'm doomed to die tonight," he gave a deep sigh.

"If you're worried about some other things, perhaps I can't give you any help. But as for these two things, it's easy for me." His wife gave Wu Kan a reassuring smile, which made him feel slightly relieved. "I'll leave you for a moment to get them for you." She said to him and in no moment she returned with the two things. Wu Kan sent them over to the magistrate immediately. Seeing these two things, the magistrate said with a smile, "You can go now."

Although the magistrate failed to daunt Wu Kan this time, he did not give up. The next day he called in Wu Kan. "Get me a *wodou* (an animal existing only in one's imagination). If you can't get it for me," he said, "a disaster will befall you."

Wu Kan hurried home to his wife with the bad news. "I happen to have it in my home. It won't be no difficult to get it here." She walked out and, after a good while, returned with a dog-like beast. "Here's a *wodou* for your magistrate."

"What can it do?" Wu asked.

"It can eat fires." His wife answered. "A rare animal, indeed! You'd better send it to him at once."

Wu Kan took the beast to the magistrate's official residence at once. The magistrate was very angry when he saw this animal. "I asked you to get me a *wodou*," he said, "but you've brought a dog. What's special about it?"



"It can eat and discharge fire" Wu answered timidly.

The magistrate then made a fire of charcoal for the beast to eat. After eating the fire, the beast discharged a fire on the floor. "It's quite useless." The magistrate was now so angry that he ordered the remnants of the fire and put Wu Kan into prison. The attendants came in with tools. The moment they poked at the fire, a hole opened in it, out of which rushed out a big fire and storm, which soared up the walls and roofs. Thick smoke and high flames came in from all directions, blocking up the city gates. The magistrate and his family were burned into ashes. Wu Kan and his wife disappeared in the fire. After the disaster, the county site was moved several hundred steps to the west and the present county town was built upon the new site.

### Tale 31. An Old Man of Xiangyang

In the Tang Dynasty there was a man named Bin Hua, a carpenter in Xiangyang. On a spring outing, he got drunk and fell into a drunken stupor by the Han River. An old man came over to wake him up, saying, "Judging by your appearance, you are not a man who is good for nothing. I have an axe for you. With it you can make delicate and magic things. However, you must be careful with women; otherwise, you will get into trouble." Bin Hua took over the axe and bowed to the old man in deep gratitude. Sure enough, with the axe, he made birds that could fly, animals that could run and towers and pavilions that stood firm and high.

Later, he went to Anluo Prefecture and lived in the house of Wang Mei, a man of wealth and influence in that area. Admiring his uncommon craftsmanship, Wang Mei asked Bin Hua to build a pavilion supported by only one column by the pond in his garden. After the pavilion was set up, Wang Mei called his household out to have a look at it. Wang Mei had a daughter, who had returned to live with her parents since the death of her husband. She was so beautiful that few women in the world could match her in beauty. No wonder that at the first sight of her, Bin Hua fell in love with her. That night, he climbed over the wall and sneaked into her bedroom. The woman got shocked when she saw Bin Hua standing in front of her bed. He said, "If you refuse me, I'll kill you right here." With the passage of time, Wang Mei's daughter began to feel for him. Later on, every night Bin Hua would steal into her room and make love with her.

Their affairs finally leaked out. Wang Mei decided to give Bin Hua some money to send him away. Bin Hua immediately saw through his real intention, so he said, "I'm feeling much obliged to you for your kind hospitality and generous gifts. I'm afraid that I can't repay your kindness in the future. I would like to make you a magic thing now."

"What is it?" Wang asked. "If I have no use for it, I will not keep it."

"I can make you a wooden crane which can fly. In time of need, you can mount the crane. The minute you get on it, the next minute you will find yourself thousands of *li* away." Bin Hua said.

Wang Mei had never heard about such a wonderful thing, so he nodded his approval. Bin Hua took out the axe and made a pair of flying cranes out of wood with only their eyes left unfinished. Surprised, Wang asked Bin Hua why the birds had no eyes.

"If you want to fly on the wooden crane, you have to abstain from eating meat and drinking wine for a period of time. And during this period, you'd better not go near women. Otherwise, the crane will never spread their wings."

Wang followed his advice strictly in order to make them fly. When night fell, Bin Hua eloped with Wang's daughter and flew back to Xiangyang Prefecture on the cranes. At daybreak on the next day, Wang Mei found his daughter had disappeared. He searched high and low but failed. He hurried to Xiangyang in secret and reported the case to the prefecture governor. An order was immediately issued to hunt for Bin Hua. He was soon tracked down and put under arrest. In his fury, the governor had him beaten to death in court. With his death, the two cranes, which had flown to Xiangyang, lost their power to take off and fly.

### Tale 32. Dou Ning's Concubine

During the Kaiyuan Period of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, the governor of Jinzhou Prefecture, Liu Huan, had a niece named Cui, who lived in Baolin. A man named Dou Ning lived in

Fufeng County of Bianzhou Prefecture. He wished to have Cui for his wife, so he asked a matchmaker to go to Cui's house with generous gifts to make a proposal to her. But at that time, Dou Ning had a concubine at home and she had fallen pregnant. Cui agreed to marry him if Dou Ning sent away his concubine, so Dou Ning took his concubine away from his home to Songzhou.

When their boat arrived where a main road started, darkness had fallen and they stopped over for the night. That night, Dou's concubine gave birth to twin baby girls. The woman was extremely exhausted. Thinking this a good opportunity, Dou Ning put her to death. He stuffed sands and stones into her belly and threw her together with the new-born babies into the river. After he returned to Bianzhou, he lied to Cui, saying, "I've sent my concubine away." He then chose an auspicious day to take Cui home.

Over the following fifteen years, Cui gave birth to quite a few children, but all the boys died and only two girls survived. One April day in the second year of the Yongtai Period, Dou Ning found a letter lying on his desk. He opened it at once and found it was written by his dead father, who said to his son, "You've been found guilty of murdering your concubine and her daughters and within one month a great disaster will happen to you. You must lose no time in making proper arrangement for your family. You should marry your elder daughter to Cui Yan, chief secretary of Bianzhou Prefecture and your younger daughter to Li Ri, the former commandant of Kaifeng Prefecture. They could have happy marriages."

Dou Ning felt sceptical about the warning in the letter. So he said to his wife, "Don't believe it. It's just a dirty trick played by fox spirits." Ten days later, he found another letter in his house. He opened it and found a warning similar to the last one, which said, "I've warned you of the disaster. But you simply ignored it. Why not believe me? What a blundering fool!" After reading it, Dou Ning was still sceptical. The next day, they found in the courtyard a third letter, which said in a very sad and grave tone, "The disaster is coming upon you." Only then did Dou Ning begin to take it seriously.

"Ask yourself please whether you have done anything wrong, will you? If you have, you must at once pray to Heaven to be exempted from punishment." Although he told his wife nothing of his murdering his concubine, Dou Ning was very frightened. At noon on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the fifth month when all were at rest, there was a sudden peal of knocks at his door. Filled with fear, Dou Ning opened the door to see his murdered concubine standing before him. He was shocked. She went in and, bowing to Dou, said, "How have you been these years? We haven't seen each other for a long time." Hearing this, Dou Ning was so frightened that he scurried back into his room and hid himself. The ghost followed at his heels into the house.

Cui asked the evil-looking stranger in astonishment, "Who are you?"

The ghost at once concealed her ghastly expression and put on a smiling face. She said to Cui, "I am Dou Ning's concubine. He killed me and my twin baby girls fifteen years ago in order to marry you. I had never let him down before and I would not have objected to leaving this house for you to move in if he had asked me. But why did he put me to death so cruelly? I'm just a woman of humble birth. These years, I have continuously appealed to the mountain gods and deities but none was willing to listen to me. I have been so wrongly treated that the Lord of Heaven felt sympathy for me and has issued an imperial order to revenge my death. That's why I'm here to take away the life of Dou Ning. There's nothing to do with you, so you don't have to feel afraid of me."

Filled with great sorrow and horror, Cui asked, "Could I atone for my sins by doing good deeds and accumulating merit?"

"I'm claiming nothing more than Dou's life," the ghost said harshly. "How could one make atonement for the crime of murder by doing good things? Take you for example. If you had been murdered, do you think the murderer could atone by his merits and achievements for your lost life? I can't believe your words." The ghost then turned to Dou Ning, saying, "The net of Heaven has meshes, but it lets nothing through and the guilty can never escape Heaven's justice. What's the use of hiding yourself like a fox and scurrying here and there like a rat?" While saying this, she rushed into the hall and caught Dou Ning. Biting, pinching, scratching and clawing, she tormented him the whole day before she left with a warning: "Don't be expecting a quick death. I'll try every means to torture you to death."

From then on, the ghost haunted his house every day. Once she came, she would bite and gnaw his limbs and his body. The ghost often put on a distorted and ugly face and constantly changing her form. Dou's family got so scared that they did not know how to deal with it. Later, the ghost began to beat Dou's two daughters, inflicting tremendous suffering on them. Then there was a monk named Tan Linguo who was good at chanting incantations, so Dou Ning sent for him and built an altar for him at home. One

day, the ghost appeared as usual but she did not dare to step further when she saw the monk. The monk said severely, "Oh ghost, you should not interfere with human affairs. What do you come here for? I'll summon in the Buddha warrior attendants to smash you into powder."

The ghost retorted, "A monk should practise Buddhism by praying to Buddha and treating things with justice and people with fairness and kindness. Why do you conceal truth and distort justice to protect a murderer? Dou Ning killed me for no good reason. I'm here for nothing but for justice. How can you say I'm interfering with human affairs? I have got approval from the Heavenly God to avenge myself. Do you think the Buddha warrior attendants may have permitted him to commit the crime of murdering his concubine secretly?"

After saying this, the ghost stepped forward and clawed and scratched Dou Ning as she had done before. Cui asked the monk to pray secretly to Buddha for the marriage of her two daughters. The ghost, thus maybe aware of the marriage, said indignantly to the monk, "Don't you monks feel ashamed to make a match for them?" Hearing this, the monk felt regret and shame and left Dou's house immediately.

Later, the families of Cui Yan and Li Ri came to take Dou's daughters home and then fled their hometown. The ghost did not come in pursuit of them as they had feared. "I have bound up your feet with a long rope," she said. "How can you escape from my hands?" In the following few years, Dou's two daughters died one after another and Dou Ning, bewitched by the ghost, went mad, biting his own limbs, jumping into water, fire and manure pits, and eating his own excrement. Soon his skin was decayed and scorched and peeled off his body. A few years later, he died. His wife, Cui, went to the Eastern Capital to become a Buddhist nun. Since then the story of Dou Ning has spread far and wide.

### Tale 33: Yang Wengbo

Yang Wengbo, a native of Lulong, was extremely filial towards his parents. After his parents died, he buried them in Mt. Wuzhong. The mountain stood as high as eighty *li* and had no water at the summit. Yang Wengbo built a hut for himself to keep vigil over the tomb of his parents. He lamented crying over their death day and night. The Heavenly God was moved by his filial piety and made spring water flow by the tomb. Yang Wengbo led the water downhill towards the imperial road for the passengers to drink and wash.

One day, a man led his horse to drink water from the spring by the roadside. He gave Yang Wengbo one *sheng* of white cobblestones and asked him to plant them in the fields. Yang Wengbo did as he was told. Soon from the fields grew out white jade stones, among which there were quite a few pair of jade bars as long as two feet. Later a young god came flying from Heaven and took him to a mountain out on the sea inhabited by immortals. He introduced Yang to the celestial beings there: "This is Yang Wengbo, the jade grower." Then an immortal walked over to Yang and said, "The Lord of Heaven was moved by your filial piety and gave you the jade seeds. Now jade has grown. You and your wife are to be immortals and this palace will be your new home. When the Lord of Heaven goes on an imperial tour of this mountain, take out ten bars of jade and present them to His Majesty as a gift." Then the young god saw Yang Wengbo home. Before the god left, Yang gave him ten pieces of jade.

A man named Xu of Beiping had a daughter. Yang Wengbo made a proposal to her through a go-between. Xu said to the matchmaker, "If Wengbo gives me a pair of white jade stones as betrothal gifts, I'll marry my daughter off to him." Wengbo sent the gift over to Xu and took his daughter home. Years later, a dragon came flying from the cloud and carried Yang and his wife up to Heaven on its back.

Their house is today called "House of Jade Field". After they ascended to Heaven, his descendants set up a big stone column in the jade fields in memory of their becoming immortals.

### Tale 34. Monk Xuanzhao

Monk Xuanzhao practised Buddhism in the White Bird Valley of Mt. Songshan. He distinguished himself among the monks as a strict observer of the doctrines and rules of Buddhism. He had a long-cherished wish to preach the Buddhist Sutra, the Lotus of the True Law, a thousand times to benefit people and to bring home to them the essence of the law. In spite of the difficult access to the valley of the remote mountain, his preaching always attracted people from all parts of the country. Even in scorching hot summer and in frozen cold winter, one could never find an empty seat in the sermon hall. Among the big

audience were three old men, who always listened to his preaching with great piety and attention. This went on for a few days and their unusual devotion finally drew the attention of Monk Xuanzhao.

One morning the three old men paid a visit to Monk Xuanzhao, saying, "We're dragons. Each of us is put in charge of different tasks. We have been working hard at our post for thousands of years. We've now benefited much from your preaching and would like to do something to repay your teaching. If we could be of any help to you, please feel free to tell us."

The monk said, "The land has long since dried up under the scorching sun, the fields have failed to yield crops and people are suffering starvation. I wish you to do nothing for me but bring rain to save the starving people."

"It's easy for us to gather clouds and summon rain," the three old men said, "but we are not allowed to bring a single drop of rainwater without permission. If we acted presumptuously, we would be severely punished and even would run the risk of being beheaded. However, we have a suggestion for you and it might work if you would give it a try."

"Please tell me what I can do."

"Mr. Sun Simiao<sup>161</sup>, a hermit living in Mt. Shaoshi, is a man of high virtue. He is the only man who can save us from being punished. If he agrees to come to our rescue, we will bring rain immediately."

"I know Mr. Sun Simiao is a hermit and he is living a reclusive life in the mountain, but I don't know much about his power. How can I be sure of it?"

"Mr. Sun Simiao's virtues are boundless. His talents and merits will benefit hundreds and thousands of generations. His reputation as a recluse is so high that it has reached heaven above. If he agrees to protect us, surely there will be no risk to our lives. What we are expecting of you is to go to ask him for help. If he promises to help us, we will summon rain at once." After saying this, they gave detailed instructions to Monk Xuanzhao for what to do next.

The monk made his way immediately for Mt. Shaoshi with a pious heart. After sitting for a while, Xuanzhao said, "You're a man of the highest virtue, wisdom and kindness and you're always ready to help the common people and save their lives. Now there is a famine threatening the people because of the serious drought. They need water badly and it's the right time to bestow your blessings upon them. I'm here to beg you to show mercy on the starving people."

"I've settled down here in order to live a secluded life because I can't do people any good." Sun Simiao said to the monk. "How can I be of any help to them? If there is anything I can do, I will definitely spare no efforts."

"I had a talk with three dragons yesterday. I asked them to summon rain to the dried land but they told me that there would be a risk to their lives if they brought rain water without authorisation. I was told that only you, as a man of high virtues and great merits, could save their lives. To eliminate the drought is my wish and I beg you to give serious thought to my request," the monk said sincerely.

"If I could manage it, I would do my best," Mr. Sun said.

"After the rain falls," said the monk, "the three dragons will flee for their lives to your place and hide themselves in the pond behind your cottage. When a man with an unusual appearance comes in pursuit of them, please ask him to show mercy to the three dragons. He is sure to absolve them from their guilt."

Mr. Sun Simiao agreed without any reluctance.

On his way back, the monk came upon the three old men. He told them that Mr. Sun had promised to help. Then they at once summoned rain. It rained one day and one night, moistening one thousand *li* of land. The next day, the monk went to Mr. Sun with the good news. They were talking happily when an extraordinary-looking man came straight to the pond. Standing by the water, he chanted spells. In no time, the pond was iced over and out of it came climbing three otters, two grey and one white. The man tied them up with a red rope. Before he left, Mr. Sun Simiao went up to the man.

"They are guilty of a crime that merits the death penalty because they've summoned the rain without permission," Mr. Sun said to the man. "However, it is me who is blame because I asked them to do that. I wish you could spare their lives and plead for them to the Heavenly God."

Hearing this, the man immediately set them free and went away with the rope. After a while, the three old men came over to thank Mr. Sun Simiao, wishing to do something to repay his kindness. But Mr. Sun said, "I live in the mountain by myself and there is nothing I need from you."

Then they turned to Monk Xuanzhao and bowed to him in gratitude. "I am living deep in mountains. There is nothing I need for life but a rope and a bowl of rice. I don't need you to reward me, either," the



monk said to the three old men. But they insisted on doing something for him, so the monk said, "A mountain stands in front of the monastery, making the way in and out quite inconvenient. Can you remove it for me?"

"It's a trifling matter to us. We can get rid of it right now if you don't mind the sound of gales and thunderclaps. That night, thunderstorms roared and rumbled in front of the monastery until the early next morning when the mountain was found to be there no more. The land stretching before the monastery was as even and flat as the palm of a hand. The three old men came over to say good-bye before they left. They bowed to Monk Xuanzhao with big thank you.

### Tale 35. The Baby Daughter of a Vegetable Gardener

There was once a scholar, who had come of age but had not taken a wife. Anxious to get married, he proposed through go-betweens to dozens of young women but none of his proposes was accepted. So he turned to a fortune-teller for advice.

"One's marriage is determined by fate," the fortune-teller said. "Your wife-to-be is only two years old."

"Where is she now? What is her name?" The scholar asked.

"She is so-and-so by name," the fortune-teller answered, "and she is now in the south of Huazhou Prefecture. Her parents live by growing vegetables and they have only one daughter who is to be your wife."

Gentry-born and gentry-bred, the scholar thought that his wife should come from a rich and influential family. Although he was sceptical about what the fortune-teller said, he was quite upset at the thought of having a gardener's daughter for his wife. So he decided to go to Huazhou to check things out. While looking for the girl, he found a vegetable garden to the south of the town. He asked the gardener what his name was and whether he had a daughter only two years old. The answer he got from the gardener checked perfectly with what the fortune-teller had said. This made him extremely disappointed. One day, when the girl's parents went out to the garden, the scholar sneaked into their house. He called the girl over, thrust a thin needle into the top of her head and fled Huazhou at once, believing that there was no chance of her survival. Unexpectedly, the girl did survive and lived as if nothing had happened to her. When she was five or six years old, both of her parents died, leaving her an orphan under no one's care. The local magistrate reported her case to the governor of the prefecture. Out of sympathy, the governor decided to take the girl home to live with his family. One or two years later, she became a clever and thoughtful girl. The governor loved her so much that he adopted her as his daughter. In the year when the governor was transferred to another prefecture, she had grown up into a young lady.

After passing the imperial examinations, the scholar was made an official in charge of imperial documents and files. On a business trip, he came to the governor's prefecture. When he got to the governor's official residence, he produced his name card and asked for an audience with the governor. Deeply impressed by his unusual intelligence and noble manners, the governor gave the scholar a warm reception. When asked whether he was married, the young official said that he was still single. Knowing that he came from an intellectual family and had mastered great learning, the governor decided to marry off his daughter to the young official. He then had his intention conveyed to the young official, who was quite happy and accepted the proposal without any hesitation. Soon a wedding ceremony was held. The young man had never expected to have so generous a dowry from the governor and to have so beautiful a woman as wife. He now could not but feel how ridiculous was the tale the fortune-teller had told him.

Later, whenever the weather turned gloomy, his wife would complain to him about headache. Her sufferings lasted for a few years until one day they consulted a famous doctor, who said, "The trouble comes from the crown of the head." He then applied some ointment on her head. Shortly afterwards, the crown festered and a needle came out. Her sufferings ended when the needle was pulled out. The scholar then made a secret investigation among the governor's relatives and friends into his wife's family background and found finally that she was no other than the gardener's daughter. Only then did he realise that the fortune-teller had been right. An official in Xiangzhou Prefecture took great pleasure in telling this story to his friends.

### Tale 36. Wang Daoping

During the reign of Emperor Shihuang of the Qin dynasty, there was a man named Wang Daoping, who was a native of Chang'an. When he was young, he fell in love with a girl in his village named Fuyu, and they swore to be wife and husband when they grew up. Fuyu was the daughter of Tang Shuxie and her beauty was beyond description. Soon afterwards, the young man was conscripted into the army and sent to the south on a punitive expedition. He wandered about the south and did not return until nine years later. Seeing that Fuyu had grown up, her parents promised Liu Xiang to let him have their daughter as wife. Keeping in mind the oath she had taken, she refused to marry any man other than Daoping. Later, however, under ever-increasing pressure from her parents, she gave in and became Liu's wife. She was quite unhappy about the marriage, and could not help missing Daoping. Three years later, she died in despair.

Three years after her death, Daoping returned home from the south. He asked the village people, "Where is the girl now?"

They said, "She wished to be your wife, but her parents forced her to marry Liu Xiang. She is already dead now."

"Where is her grave?" Daoping asked.

They led him to the grave. At the sight of her tomb, he could not but wail over the loss of her, crying out her name three times. He walked around her grave mourning for her death, and nothing could stop him pouring forth his feelings for her. With tears running down his cheeks, he sobbed out, "You and I had sworn to Heaven and Earth to be husband and wife and stick to each other to the ends of our lives. I had never expected that I would be conscripted and we would be set apart from each other, neither had I thought that your parents would force you into a marriage. Since we can't fulfil our oath as we wished, let me have a last look at you if your soul remains with you. If your soul has left you, I will see no more of you again in my life."

After saying this, he could not help crying sadly again. A while later, the soul of the dead girl came out of the grave and asked Daoping, "Where have you returned from? It's long since we parted from each other. I had sworn to be your wife and live with you for the rest of our lives. My father forced me to marry Liu Xiang, and I had no alternative but to agree. During the three years after the marriage, not a single day passed without missing you. I missed you so much that I was taken ill and died in regret. Since then death had separated me from you. However, you haven't forgotten about our oath, and asked earnestly to see me. Since my body hasn't decayed, I will be able to come back to life and be your wife. Open my tomb without delay and help me out of my coffin, and surely you will see me rise from the dead."

Hearing this, Wang Daoping opened the grave at once. Touching her body, he felt life coming back to her. She tidied her appearance, adjusted her clothes, and walked with Daoping to his home.

Dumbfounded at the news, her husband, Liu Xiang went to court to claim his wife. Officials of the county and prefecture, however, found no rules or laws available to judge the case by, so they reported it to the emperor. The emperor awarded Fuyu to Wang Daoping. She enjoyed a long life of 120 years. This must be the reward given to them by Heaven and Earth for their genuine love.

### Tale 37. Guan Lu

Guan Lu, whose other name was Gong Ming, was a master of magic arts. He could tell one's past and foresee his future. One day of May, he saw a lad reaping wheat in the fields while wandering across the plain of Nanyang Prefecture. Heaving a deep sigh, he walked over to the lad.

"Grandpa, why are coming along sighing?" asked the lad.

"What's your name?"

"Zhao's my family name and my first name's Yan," answered the lad.

"I'm fine myself. I sighed because I have seen that you are destined to die before reaching the age of twenty years."

With great fear, Zhao Yan knelt down to the old man and asked how to prolong his life.

"One's life is determined by Heaven and I can't save you," said Guan Lu.



Disappointed, Zhao Yan hurried home to break the terrible news to his father. Yan's father mounted on his horse at once and galloped out to the wheat fields. After running about ten *li*, he caught up with Guan Lu. He dismounted from his horse and walked over to Guan Lu with great respect.

"Just now you told my son he was 'destined to die before reaching twenty'. Please try your best to prolong his life. We'll repay your kindness", said Yan's father.

"Whether one can live a long or a short life is not decided by me. I haven't the power to save him. But since you're pleading with me so earnestly and sincerely, I would like to have a try. Please go home first to prepare a flagon of wine and one *jin* of dried venison. I'll go to your house at breakfast time to give you some help. But I'm not sure whether there will be any use in this."

When he got home, the father began to prepare wine and venison as instructed. After getting everything ready, he went outside to wait for Guan Lu. Sure enough, Guan Lu arrived at the agreed time.

"Go to the fields where you cut the wheat this morning, and you'll see two men playing *weiqi* chess under a big mulberry tree," said Guan Lu to Zhao Yan, "Just present them with wine and venison. First serve them with the wine. While they're drinking, lay out the venison before them. They are bound to have wine while playing *weiqi*. Once they empty their cups, fill them up again until they have drunk all the wine. If they ask something of you, just bow to them and make no reply. Then there will be somebody who'll come to your help. I'll stay here to wait for you."

So Zhao Yan went out to the fields. When he arrived there, he found as expected two men playing *weiqi* under the mulberry tree. Laying out the venison and presenting the wine, he attended upon them with great care. The two men concentrated on the checkerboard while drinking and eating, paying no attention to Zhao Yan. After drinking several cups of wine, they finished playing. The man facing south looked up and saw Zhao Yan standing by, waiting on them.

"Why are you here with us?" he asked with an angry voice.

Zhao Yan bowed to him but made no reply.

"One should feel ashamed when he has eaten someone else's food. Having drunk the wine and eaten the meat, how can we show no sign of gratefulness to him?" said the man facing north.

"But the book of life has long been finalised and can't be changed at will."

"Let me have a look, please."

When he saw Zhao Yan's life fixed at nineteen years, the man facing the north said, "It's easy to make a change here." He took out a brush pen and ticked the word 'nine' above 'ten'. "Now I've lengthened your life up to ninety years," said the man.

Filled with great pleasure, Zhao Yan bowed his thanks and headed for home in high spirits.

When he got home, he saw Guan Lu still waiting for him.

"Congratulations that your life has been prolonged. Please remember the man facing south is the Northern Dipper in charge of man's death and the man facing north, the Southern Dipper, is responsible for man's birth. The Southern Dipper keeps a record of those who become pregnant and passes the record on to the Northern Dipper, to whom all man's wishes are to be presented.

Zhao Yan's father offered silk and gold to Guan Lu in gratitude, but he left without accepting the gifts.

#### Tale 38. Wang Zizhen

Wang Zizhen was a native of Taiyuan. His parents loved him dearly. One day they said to Zizhen with a sigh, "Although you have grown up, you haven't received much education. It would be good for you to go to Dingzhou to be Mr. Bian Xiao's student." Mr. Bian Xiao, a native of Xinyi County in Chenliu Prefecture, was an erudite scholar of ancient books. As a man of great learning, he had never been baffled by any questions. After the death of Confucius, nobody but Mr. Bian Xiao deserved the title of Great Master of Learning. Those who had had three years of study under his guide all held him in great admiration and respected his wisdom and scholarship. In fact, nobody could be counted as a match for him in education. So each year, there were many young men coming from different parts of the country to seek admission to his school.

Following the advice of his parents, Zizhen set out on his journey the next day. When he crossed over the prefecture boundary and arrived at a place about three hundred *li* away from Dingzhou, he stopped for a rest in the shade of a tree. Then a ghost disguised as a young man appeared from behind and sat down

close to Zizhen, who did not have the least suspicion of anyone sitting beside him. The ghost asked Zizhen's name and also inquired where he came from and where he was going.

"My parents want me to go to Dingzhou to study under Mr. Bian Xiao because I haven't had a good education at home. I'm Wang Zizhen from Taiyuan."

"I'm Li Xuanshi from Bohai Prefecture<sup>198</sup>. My parents died long ago and I'm now living by myself. My brothers think I've made little progress in my study at home, and they want me to go to Dingzhou to study with Mr. Bian Xiao. Since both of us are going to be Mr. Bian's students, we are now classmates and brothers."

"You must be older than I. I'd like to call you elder brother."

"I'm only too happy to be your elder brother."

They then went their way together to Dingzhou. When they arrived, they found accommodation in a hotel. Drinking and eating, they swore to each other: "No matter whether we shall be rich or poor, live or die in the future, the friendship between us will be evergreen." After taking the oath, they went together to call on Mr. Bian. The scholar asked them why they had gone to see him. They revealed their intention to the scholar, who was happy to take them in and began to teach them classical Confucianism.

Three years had passed. In these three years Li Xuanshi made such a remarkable progress that he even surpassed his teacher in scholarship.

"There's no denying that you are a man of the highest talent. How have you acquired a greater ability of understanding than I? I'm now an old and useless man. Could you please tell me your way of studying?" Mr. Bian asked Xuanshi.

"I'm your student owing to a pre-destined fate in my previous life. I am always puzzled as to how I've understood and commanded what you've taught in class. I'm no more talented than others except for the fact that I have a good memory. Once something comes into my mind, it never leaves."

When Wang Zizhen read a book and came across a question that was hard to understand, Xuanshi would explain it to him. Because of this, Zizhen felt grateful and held him in awe and veneration as his father and teacher. With his help, Zizhen made much progress in his learning.

Later, a man named Wang Zhongxiang, also a native of Taiyuan Prefecture and from the same clan as Zizhen, who served as attendant to the Crown Prince, paid a visit to Mr. Bian Xiao when he passed through Dingzhou on business. He stayed in the school for the night. This Wang at once realised that Xuanshi was a ghost. Early the next morning, he came over to say good-bye to Zizhen.

"You and I are just like brothers born of the same parents," said Zhongxiang, "so I should have nothing to conceal from you. Your friend, Xuanshi, is not a man but a ghost."

"Xuanshi is a most talented man of the highest virtue. He is very learned and well versed in classical ancient books and even Mr. Bian holds him in high esteem. How can you say he's a ghost?"

"What I said of him just now has nothing to do with his talents or virtues. You're a man but Li Xuanshi a ghost. A man is totally different from a ghost, so how can a ghost be judged as good or bad? If you are still sceptical about what I've said, you might as well spread out some new leaves under the bed mat and ask him to lie on it while you sleep in another bed. Tomorrow morning, you will know for yourself the truth about him. The leaves on your bed will be pressed flat while those spread on his bed will remain puffy and soft." After saying this, Zhongxiang took his leave.

Although Zizhen still had some doubts about Zhongxiang's words, before evening he placed some leaves under the bed mat as he had been told. It turned out that Li Xuanshi was indeed a ghost as Zhongxiang had said.

"I've heard you're a ghost. Is it true?"

"You're right. It must have been Wang Zhongxiang who betrayed me. Since my real self has been made known to you, I'll let you know all about me. Before I came here, a high-ranking official in the nether world had recommended me to be the Chief Secretary of Mt. Tai, because the former chief secretary had served at this post for quite a few years and had to be promoted to a higher position. The King of Hell nominates people for any post strictly according to his ability and he had intended to have somebody else instead of me for the position of Chief Secretary to Lord of Mt. Tai. But he couldn't find anybody more suitable for this job than me. So he summoned me in and said to me:

'Your talents and manners make you a good candidate for the position. But I think you're always content with things as they are and you're also lacking in scholarship, so you'd better go to study under

the supervision of Mr. Bian Xiao for a couple of years. Once you finish your study there, come back and I'll make you the Chief Secretary of Mt. Tai.'

Mortals dread ghosts, so I had transformed myself into a man before I came to study here with you under the guidance of Mr. Bian Xiao. In less than a year, I had learned from Mr. Bian more than enough for the position. Now I have been at this post for two years. I like you very much and hate to part from you. Since you know I'm a ghost, I can't keep you company any more and have to say good-bye to you now. But there's one thing I must let you know. The other day, I had a backache because of your father. A man accused your father of killing his grandsons and eating his brothers. He had come many times to the Court of Hell with bills of indictment against your father. Believing the judge in charge of this case to be irresponsible because he didn't decide it in his favour, the man appealed to the King of Hell for justice. Assuming it was me who interfered in the case, the King of Hell had my back beaten one hundred times with a birch. That's how I suffered from a backache. Today the King of Hell has your father held under arrest, and he will give a personal hearing to this case and will deprive your father of his life in the mortal world. So you must go home as fast as possible to see your father. As long as there's one breath left in him, there should be a chance of his survival. Bring wine and venison to the suburbs as sacrificial offerings to me and call my name three times and I'll come to your help. If he has breathed his last, there'll be no way of bringing him back to life. You've finished your studies here and you should continue your study to ensure more achievements in your career. I'll help you prolong your life and plead with the Heavenly Emperor to endow you with official glory and bless you with peace and health."

Wang Zizhen bowed to Xuanshi in great gratitude and went to ask Mr. Bian Xiao for leave to go home to see his parents. When he got home, he saw his father lying in bed with a breath left. He at once hurried on his way to the suburbs with wine and venison and money. After he got there, he held a sacrificial ceremony in honour of Xuanshi. He had scarcely called his name three times when Li Xuanshi appeared wearing scarlet robe and an official hat. He was sitting in a splendidly decorated white horse-drawn chariot, with dozens of horse-riding attendants crowding around. Walking farthest in front were two junior officers with tallies in their hands, calling out for the passers-by to step aside. This Xuanshi seemed to Zizhen no different from the one he had studied with for the past three years.

"Please close your eyes and you will see your father," Xuanshi said to Zizhen. He closed his eyes and soon found himself in the Court of Hell with the gate opening to the north.

"I had intended to take you to your father's cell. But he has been made so terrible-looking in the gaol that one cannot bear to have a look. I would rather you did not see him now. You will see a bare-footed man wearing a white robe and a purple scarf and holding a roll of documents in his hands. That man is none other than your father's enemy and he will come here soon because he is required to appear in court before sunset to bring a charge against your father in his presence. I have brought you a bow and arrow. Don't leave here. When he comes into your sight, shoot him to death and your father will be saved. Otherwise, it will be hard to bring him back to life."

Just at this moment, the enemy appeared. Xuanshi winked at Zizhen: "It's him. Shoot him carefully. I must be off to my office, for my presence here might arouse suspicion." Then Li made his way to his office. The moment Xuanshi left, the man came up. He presented himself in front of the court table, pouring forth his grievances. Without hesitation, Wang Zizhen held up his bow and hit his left eye. He dropped the bill of indictment in pain and ran out of the court. Zizhen picked it up and saw in it a long list of indictments against his father. With tears in his eyes, he went to tell Xuanshi.

"Where did you hit him?" Xuanshi asked.

"In the left eye."

"You've missed the vital part. After he is recovered from his eye wound, he will indict your father with even greater resentment. So you'd better return home to find him out and kill him. Only then can your father be cured of his illness."

"Who is my father's enemy?"

"Kill whoever looks like the man you've shot at here."

Wang Zizhen left Xuanshi in such a hurry that he forgot to ask the enemy's name. After he reached home, he tried hard to find the man but failed. Worried and disappointed, he could not eat anything for seven days. Then a servant came in and told him that a white rooster had not been seen for seven days and that nobody knew where it had gone. The household was sent out in search of the lost rooster and soon it was found sitting on the top of a wall with the left eye injured. The rooster with white feathers, bare claws

and a purple cockscomb reminded him of the bare-footed man in white with a purple scarf he had encountered in the Court of Hell. "It must be the enemy of my father," he thought to himself. He caught the rooster and killed it and made it into delicious soup for his father. A couple of days later, his father recovered fully from his illness.

Later, Wang Zizhen was made a senior official in Taiyuan Prefecture and was then promoted to the position of provincial governor in the reign of Emperor Jing Di of the Han Dynasty. He enjoyed a long life of one hundred and thirty-eight years. He owed all this to his benefactor, Li Xuanshi. It follows that "Chickens can't be kept for more than three years and dogs for more than six years, and roosters can't be raised at all," for they could bring disasters to you.

### Tale 39. Tian Kunlun

Once upon a time, there was a man named Tian Kunlun, who was so poor that nobody was willing to marry his daughter to him. In his fields there was a pond. The pond was very deep and the water was very clear.

When the harvest time came, Tian went to his fields to get in his crops, and he found three young ladies bathing in the pond. He sneaked forward but when he came to within about one hundred paces from the pond, the three beautiful ladies changed into three white cranes. Two of them flew out of the pond to a nearby tree and perched on its top, leaving the youngest one behind in the water. He then crept into the millet straw and crawled forward in order to have a closer look. It turned out that the bathing girls were goddesses from Heaven. The two elder sisters snatched up their clothes and disappeared into the sky, while their younger sister was so dumbfounded at the sight of Tian's approaching her that she did not dare to move. Shy of coming out of the pond naked, she was left helpless in the water.

"We three sisters are heavenly girls, coming to bathe in the pond for fun. My elder sisters grasped their clothes and flew away, leaving me behind. You've taken away my clothes, and I can't get out of the water now. I beg you to return the clothes to me so that I can put them on and walk out of the water to marry you." The goddess said to Tian.

Kunlun thought it over for quite a while, and decided not to give back the heavenly clothes to the lady from Heaven for fear that she should fly off if she got back her clothes. "I'm afraid that I can't give back your clothes for the time being," said Tian, "but I'd like to take off my clothes to wrap you up if you didn't mind."

The heavenly girl refused to take his clothes, saying she would not get out of water until it became dark. Time went by quickly and there seemed still to be no way for her to get back her clothes. "I'm putting myself completely at your disposal," said she helplessly. "Take off your clothes to wrap me up. Help me out of the water and I'll go with you to your house and be your wife."

Tian Kunlun was very happy. He folded her clothes up and hid them in a most secret place. Then he took off his own clothes and handed them to the heavenly girl. The girl put them on and walked out of the pond. She said to Tian, "Give me back my clothes, please. If you're afraid of me flying off, you can hold me by the arm. Believe me that I'll follow you to your house." But Tian simply wouldn't listen to her. With Tian holding her by the arm, the heavenly lady walked to his home.

Tian's mother was very happy to see the beautiful girl from Heaven and she prepared a rich feast at once and invited many of their relatives and friends to the wedding reception. Although born a goddess in Heaven, the bride had learnt much about affairs between man and woman in the world of mortals, so she encountered hardly any problems in adapting herself to married life with Tian Kunlun.

Time passed quickly and soon the lady from Heaven bore Tian a lovely son, named Tian Zhang. Before he had time to celebrate the birth of his son, Tian Kunlun was conscripted and dispatched on a punitive expedition to the western frontiers never to return, leaving behind his wife looking after their new-born son at home. When the boy was three years old, the heavenly lady said to her mother-in-law, "I am a goddess from Heaven. When I came flying to this world, I had a slight figure. Now I'd like to have a look at my clothes to see whether I've grown out of it or not. If you could kindly allow me to have a look, I would die content even if I could not live to see tomorrow."

Before Tian Kunlun left home, he had said to his mother time and again, "These are the heavenly girl's clothes. You must find a secret place to hide them in and never show them to her. If she gets back her clothes, she will certainly fly in them and leave us for ever."



"Where do you think is the best place for these clothes?" asked his mother. They looked all around and could not find a better place than their house. So Tian Kunlun dug out a hole under the bed of his mother and put the clothes in the hole. How could anyone discover the clothes and take them out from under the bed on which an old woman slept? Having found a safe place for the clothes, Tian Kunlun left home for the western frontiers. A life without a man at home made things rather difficult for the heavenly lady and she could not but think of her clothes. With her brows knitted and eyes lowered, she looked extremely distressed and smiles were never seen on her face from then on.

"Please let me try on my clothes." She pleaded with her mother-in-law so earnestly that the old woman found it more and more difficult to refuse her. Finally she gave in to her request but on the condition that she should go and stay away from the house before the clothes were taken out and shown to her. The goddess went outside without any hesitation. In her absence, the old woman hurried into her bedroom and took out her clothes carefully from the hole under her bed. At the sight of her own clothes, the heavenly lady could not help feeling a twinge at her heart and tears began running down her cheeks. Stroking her clothes all over, she could not resist the temptation of putting them on and flying back to Heaven. With her mother-in-law high on alert, the goddess found it impossible to fly off, so she took them off, asking her mother-in-law to put them back to the hiding place.

A few days later, she said to the old woman, "Please let me have another look at my clothes."

"What if you put them on and fly away?"

"I used to be a heavenly girl, but now, I am your son's wife and have borne him a son. How could I bear to abandon you and my son? I'll never leave you alone in this world with my son."

For fear of her flying off, the old woman had several men stand guard at the door while keeping a watchful eye on her daughter-in-law trying on the clothes. No sooner had the heavenly lady put on her clothes than she rose upwards and flew into the sky through a window. Beating her breast and stamping her feet, the old woman bitterly regretted having believed what she had said, but it was too late to repent because her daughter-in-law had flown out of sight. The heart-broken woman cried out her misfortunes loudly, and her bitter crying even reached Heaven. She lost all her appetite and wished to die rather than live with her grandson without parental care.

The goddess had lived on earth for five years before she returned to Heaven. But five years in the world of mortals was no more than two days in Heaven. When her two elder sisters saw her come back, they jeered at her, calling her 'Old Woman', saying there was nothing worth regretting since the Tians were merely earthly mortals.

"What's there to be lamenting over? Tomorrow we'll take you to the world to see your son."

Tian Zhang was already five years old. He kept crying for mummy after she left him for Heaven. One day, he ran out to the fields again to look for his mother. A man called Mr. Dong Zhong wandered along and saw him wailing sadly. Knowing his mother would soon come from Heaven to see him, he said to the child, "When the sun rises high at noon, look towards the pond over there and you'll see three ladies in white skirts walking towards you. Two of them will raise their heads to look at you while the youngest one will lower her head. The one pretending not to cast a look at you is the mother you're looking for."

With this in mind, Tian Zhang waited there until noon when three ladies appeared by the pond. The elder sisters knew the little boy walking towards them was Tian Zhang, so they said to their younger sister, "Here comes your son." Tian Zhang ran forward while crying all the way "Mummy, Mummy". Shy as she was, she could not control her feelings any longer at the sight of her own flesh and blood running towards her, crying for his mother. Tears burst into her eyes. Then the three heavenly ladies wrapped the child up in their clothes and flew him to Heaven.

Their father was very happy to see the child and he loved him dearly as his grandson. He taught him astrology, the calendar, medicine, divination, and magical arts, etc. After four or five days in Heaven, which was equal to fifteen years on earth, Tian Zhang became a man of great learning. His heavenly grandfather said to him, "Take with you eight volumes of my books to your world and they will bring you great wealth and power, which you can enjoy all your life. If you become an imperial official, keep in mind two words 'Be careful'."

Soon Tian Zhang left his mother and returned home. Now there was nothing in the world that he did not know. Hearing he was so learned and versatile, the emperor made him Prime Minister. Later, he was found guilty of negligence, and was exiled to a remote place in the west.

One day, the emperor went out hunting with his ministers and generals in the wild fields and he shot down a white crane. He ordered to a dish to be made out of the crane. When the crane was cut open in the breast, a small child only three *cun* and two *fen* in height was found in its crop. The boy, wearing a suit of armour and a helmet, was cursing and swearing and nobody around could stop him. The emperor heard the report and then summoned in his ministers and generals as well as his attendants to ask them who the child was, but none of them could tell him. Afterwards, the emperor went hunting again and he picked up a big front tooth of the same height as the small child found in the crane's crop. He brought it to his palace and tried hard to break it into pieces but to no avail. He called his ministers and generals together and asked them to whom the tooth belonged but again none of them could give an answer. An imperial edict was issued to invite people to answer the two questions. He who could identify the boy and the tooth would be rewarded with a thousand *jin* of gold and a fief of one thousand households and a nomination of whatever imperial position he would like to hold. Nobody, however, dared to come to claim the great reward. Then the ministers and generals were called to a meeting, and after a long discussion, they concluded that none in this world but Tian Zhang could know the answers. The emperor immediately summoned Tian Zhang to his palace for an imperial audience.

"It's said that you are a man with a wide range of knowledge and there is nothing in this world that can baffle you. Today I have a question for you as to whether there's been ever a giant in the world," asked the emperor.

"Yes, Your Majesty!" was his answer.

"Then who is the giant?"

"There used to be a giant born of a royal family and his name was Qin Guyan. In a fight for the family Lu, one of his front teeth was struck off. It has been lost since then and nobody knows where it fell. If anyone should find it, Your Majesty might as well have it examined to see whether it is the one I mentioned."

"Has there ever been a dwarf in the world?" The emperor asked in a leisurely way.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then who is it?"

"There used to be a man named Li Zi'ao only three *cun* and two *fen* in height. He was swallowed in the wild fields by a crane together with a suit of armour and a helmet he was wearing. He was so small that even in the crop he could play a lot of games. If anyone happens to have had the crane hunted down, an examination of its crop will tell whether it's him or not."

The emperor nodded his head and continued, "Is there a big sound in the world?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then what is it?"

"The explosive sound of thunder can reach seven hundred *li* away and that of thunderbolt one hundred and seventy *li*. These are big sounds."

"Is there a small sound in the world?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then what is it?"

"When three men were walking side by side and one man's ear is ringing while the other two can't hear his ear ringing, this sound is really small."

"Is there a huge bird in the world?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Then what is it?"

"The roc. One second after it takes wing, it reaches the Queen Mother of the West. By a single flap of its wings, the roc will soar up to a height of nineteen thousand *li* and then it begins to have food. It can't be bigger."

"Is there a tiny bird in the world?"

"Yes, Your Majesty?"

"Then what is it?"

"No bird could be smaller than a wren. Once upon a time a wren bore and bred seven children on the antenna of a mosquito. The baby wrens soon disliked their birthplace because in their eyes it was too vast and too sparsely populated. And what's more, the mosquito had no sensation of wrens building a nest on its head. So it can't be any smaller."



Quite satisfied with his answers, the emperor at once made him General Adviser to the Royal Family and from then on Tian Zhang became known to emperors, kings and their subjects as the son of a goddess in Heaven.

#### Tale 40. The Magic Herb

There was a scholar in Linchuan, who maltreated his maidservant, and made her life unbearably miserable. The girl had no way but escaped into a mountain for fear of being tortured to death. Soon, her food was running out, and she came under the threat of being starved to death. One day, she came to sit down on the grass on a pond. The stems and leaves of the weeds around her looked so lovely that she could not help pulling some out and taking them with the roots into her mouth. They tasted quite delicious, indeed, and from then on she fed on them, and was no longer hungry. By and by she felt herself as spry as a cricket.

One night, she came to a big tree, intending to put herself up for the night under it when suddenly she heard a wild animal making its way towards the tree through the grass. She was scared at the approach of the animal. "Why not climb up the tree?" She thought to herself. Before she realised what had happened, she found herself already on the top of the tree. At daybreak the next morning, she was about to climb down the tree when, even more surprisingly, she found herself already standing on the ground. From then on, she could move her body in no moment to wherever she intended to go without any difficulty. She flew from one hilltop to another just like a bird.

Several years had passed since then. One day she was spotted by one of the scholar's servants, who had been sent to gather firewood in the mountain. He came back with the news for his master, who immediately gave an order for all his servants to hunt for her. They searched high and low in the mountain but failed to catch her. One day they caught sight of her lying deep down under a precipitous cliff. With thin ropes in hands, they rounded in from three directions. Before they came near to her, she rose suddenly high into air and alighted on the top of the mountain. Shocked and annoyed, he gave an order to catch her at all costs. One of his men said, "She is after all a maidservant. How could she turn into a fairy or immortal overnight? She must have had some elixir of magic effect. Prepare some rich and delicious food, put it on the way she comes and goes, and she will come for the food."

Sure enough, she appeared on the road as expected. She ate the food left on the road and instantly energy left her. Unable to move swiftly, she was soon captured and taken back to the scholar for interrogation. She confessed what had enabled her to go like a flying bird and what the magic grass looked like. Not until then did they know it was a precious medical herb called "huangjing" (yellow essence) that she had fed on these years. She went out into the mountain again in search of the herbs for the scholar, but returned empty-handed. A few years after that, she died.

#### Tale 41. A Scholar of Hongzhou

Cheng Youwen, chief secretary of Hongzhou prefecture, lived in a house with a window overlooking a main street of the city. One rainy day, he was sitting by the window, looking down at the muddy road below when a humble-looking lad selling shoes came into his view. After a while, there appeared a young ruffian, who stood in the way of the lad, tangling with him. The boy got tripped and slipped to the ground, and all the shoes went flying out of his hands to the muddy road. He burst into tears, begging to be paid for his loss. The ruffian, however, bawled out a string of curses at the crying boy, giving no heed to his plea.

"My family haven't had their breakfast yet. They are all waiting for me to sell the shoes and buy something to eat. Now all the shoes have been spoiled by you," sobbed the boy. At this moment, a scholar came by. He offered to indemnify the poor lad out of sympathy. The ruffian flared up at the scholar, saying, "He's begging me for money. Why put your nose into our affairs?" The scholar looked quite unhappy with the ruffian.

Out of admiration for his righteous action, Cheng invited the scholar to come over for a talk. His remarks deeply impressed Cheng, who then asked the scholar to stay in his house for the night. They talked deep into night, and then Cheng excused himself to go into his room to fetch something. He re-emerged from inside in no moment only to find the scholar already gone while all the doors and windows remained dead

shut. He searched in his house for the scholar but found him nowhere to be seen. After a little while, the scholar appeared all of a sudden in front of him.

"I can't tolerate that ruffian," said the scholar, "so I've broken off his head." He dropped it to the ground. Cheng was taken aback at the sight. "There is no denying that he defiled you with dirty words this morning. For this, you cut off his head!? Now the floor has been stained with his blood. Aren't you causing trouble for yourself?"

"Don't worry!" The scholar assured him. He took out a bottle of medicine powder, applied a tiny portion of it to the head on the floor, and rubbed it with the hair on it. Within a blink of eye, the head melted into a mass of water. He turned around, and said to Cheng, "There is nothing I can offer to you to repay your kindness except this theurgy I've just shown you."

Cheng said, "I'm not a man of supernatural predilection. I'm afraid I don't deserve having your magic medicine powder."

The scholar made a deep bow and disappeared from his view with all the doors fast locked as before.

#### Tale 42. Scholar Gou

Dashengci Temple of Yizhou was established during the Kaiyuan period. The temple, with the wing chambers all decorated with famous wall paintings of the past dynasties, topped the rest in the country, and attracted scholars to come from near and afar to pay their visit. One the east wing of the temple lied a chamber devoted to Vimalakirti, the layman Bodhisattva. In the hall of the chamber there was a mural of marvellous touches and wonderful composition.

One mid-autumn day when the temple was filled with scholars and ordinary people, there came for a visit three young men, all fond of music. When they wandered into this room, one of them pointed at this fresco, saying, "This one tells of the first metre of move two in 'the Melody of Rainbow Skirts and Feathered Suits'". Another young man by the name of Gou exclaimed, "I love more the heavenly goddess on the mural than the music itself. If only I could have her as my wife!" He went up, scratched a piece off the wall painting, and put it into his mouth, feeling great fun. They then went out and returned home.

That night, Gou dreamed of the girl of peerless beauty and dazzling brilliance coming down off the painting to meet him in the hall of Vimalakirti's Chamber. She enticed him into talking and making love to him under a window. Every night from then on, the girl would appear in his room or lured him away from home to snuggle to each other in the temple.

One month or more later, Gou's uncle, a hermit, dropped in and saw his nephew lost in a trance as if possessed. He offered to exorcise the evil spirit. With the permission of Gou's parents, the hermit had his nephew take his medicine, and then set up a terrace to perform the Daoist magic. When night fell, the heavenly girl came sobbing sadly to Gou, "I am a maidservant of Vimalakirti's. I was moved by your affections for me that day so that I could not bear to disappoint you. I entrusted myself to your love. Now that you have suspected about me, I can't come off the painting to meet you any longer. You shouldn't have taken the medicine. I'll never forget the short-lived love between us." She took out a pair of jade plectra from inside of her clothes, saying, "This is for you as a souvenir. You'll never see me again. Please take good care of yourself." Holding the jade plectra, Gou could not find a word to express his affections and gratitude. They looked at each other, with tear in their eyes.

After she left, Gou became more and more wan and shallow, and in no more than one month he died. The pair of jade plectra was kept by his family until the Shunkou period when it was found lost. However, the finger marks of the heavenly girl on the mural remain there even to date.

#### Tale 43. The Story of a Strange Fish

During the Jiayou period, a Guangdong fisherman went out fishing in the sea. One night, he caught a fish, which weighed a hundred *jin*. He carried it back in his boat. At daybreak when he pulled in to the shore, he looked at the fish, and found it having a human face and a tortuous body, from the belly and neck sticking out ten feet and two hands, which looked no different from those of human beings. Short hair grew thickly from the back, which was that of a soft-shelled turtle. The fish had an eye on the back of the head, and a lovely-looking breast of reddish dark colour alternating with emerald green one.

Some fishermen gathered around the fish, wondering what it was. He asked all of them standing by about the strange fish, but none of them could tell. Although they had no idea of what it was, they all agreed that he would for certain get himself into trouble if he killed the fish. The fisherman wrapped the strange fish in his coat, and carried it home. He put the fish under a worn-out mat in his courtyard, and invited people to identify it.

At night, there suddenly came in succession slight and soft sounds. The fisherman followed the sounds and found them coming from under the tattered mat. Although the sounds were very thin, he was sure that it was the fish that had made the sounds. He tiptoed towards the fish, strained his ears, and heard the fish whispering to itself, "I left Heaven in a fit of pique only to be caught in a net." The fisherman could not help making a slip of the tongue, and the fish shut its mouth, making no more utterances. Convinced that the fish was a freak, the fisherman did not want to keep it at home. His intention of giving away the fish was soon known to people around. A market administrator by the name of Jiang Qing heard of it. He came straight to his house and carried it home in a bamboo basket, and put it between a window and a column with the basket covered.

At midnight, he tiptoed to the basket, and picked up his ears, hearing the fish say, "I was not careful enough to make a slip of the tongue and gave away my secret. Now I've been taken into another household." The fish then returned to silence again.

The next morning when Qing was out, his wife came close to the basket to have a close look at the fish. At this time, the fish opened its mouth, saying, "I'm thirsty to death." Frightened, she walked out in a hurry to get her husband home. Qing said, "I'll put it in a huge basin and filled the basin with well water." At dusk, the fish broke the silence, saying, "I don't drink well water." Qing asked fisherman for advice, and was told that sea fish could only live in seawater. So Qing sent his servants to get seawater for the fish.

That night, Qing and his wife overheard the fish saying, "Those who let go of me will live; those who keep me captive are doomed to perish."

The woman was very dreadful at what she had heard. She begged her husband, saying "Release the fish; otherwise a disaster would befall on us."

"I've never shown any partiality to anyone doing business at the market," said Qing, "So what is there for me to fear?" He refused to set the fish free.

Two days later, Qing got drunk, and with a knife in his hand, went over to the fish, saying, "You can speak, and you must be a fish spirit. Speak to me now, and I'll let you go home in the sea. If you keep silence in my face, I'll kill you with the knife."

The fish answered, "I'm the young wife of a dragon. I had a quarrel with my husband, and left the palace for the seashore to be caught in a fishing net. There's no point of putting me to death, but if you set me free, you will be abundantly rewarded."

Qing then carried the fish in a small boat out to the sea and released it. Half a year had passed since then. One day, Qing came cross a man at the market holding in his hand a beautiful pearl for sale. He liked the pearl very much, and asked about the price. "Give me half a million coins, and it will be yours," said the man. Qing gave the man half of the money as a deposit, very happy that he could get the pearl at such a low price.

"I know you," said the man. "Take it home. I'll come to your house for the other half of the money tomorrow." He turned away and left the market, but did not come back for the money the following day as he had said.

Qing thought to himself, "The pearl is worth thousands of pieces of gold, but I've bought it rather cheap. The man doesn't come for his money. Why?"

Some other day, he caught sight of the man selling pearls at the market again. He thought that this time the man would ask him for the money, but the man told him, "I've come on behalf of the young wife of the dragon to reward you with the pearl for the mercy you've shown to her." He then went away and disappeared.

Stories about the strange fish were soon spread across the country, but it is worth mentioning that this one is a true account based on a personal interview I have had with Qing's son.

#### Tale 44. The Young Squire Wu

Zhao Yingzhi and his younger brother Zhao Maozhi were related to the Nanjing Royal Family. They lived a happy-go-lucky life. They wandered outside of home the whole day for fun. A lad named Wu from an extremely wealthy family kept their company loafing about around the capital city seeking pleasure.

One spring day they were wandering around the Jinming Pond when they discovered an inn in a back street. Surrounded by flowers and bamboo trees and with all the utensils displayed in good order, the inn looked like a pleasant and peaceful place. There were no customers in the inn at that time apart from a pretty young lady standing behind the counter. The three young men came in for a drink. "Why not invite her to join us drinking?" Zhao Yingzhi said to Wu, pointing at the beautiful girl. Wild with joy, Wu stepped up to flirt with the girl, who was only too happy to accept their invitation and walked from behind the counter and seated herself beside Wu. As she was about to raise her cup, she suddenly caught sight of her parents coming home from outside. She sprang to her feet and sneaked back to her place behind the counter. Seeing this, the three young men had no more stomach for drinks and left the inn unhappily. Now spring had come to an end and the time for going for an outing had passed, but the image of the charming girl had taken root in their heart, frequently appearing in their dreams.

The next year the three young men went together to revisit the inn. When they got there, they found it had turned into a dreary and desolate place. There was not a soul around, let alone the girl. They came in to sit down for a rest. While ordering drinks, they asked the inn-keeper and his wife, "Last year when we passed your inn, we saw a girl behind the counter. Where is she now?" The old couple frowned for a moment and then said sadly, "Last year she was left alone at home when we went out to offer sacrifices to our dead ancestors. But we returned to find her drinking with three young hooligans. We scolded her that no man would be willing to marry her if she behaved that way. She was quite depressed and a few days later she died in resentment. There is a small grave next to the house. That is hers."

Terrified at her death, the three men did not dare to ask any more questions. Hastily finishing off their wine, they left the inn, feeling sad and regretful all the way. Evening had fallen when they got near home. At this moment a woman with her head covered with a kerchief appeared before them. She walked up and said, "I am the girl you met last year at the Jinming Pond. Master Wu, are you returning from your visit to my home? My parents must have told you that I had died and showed you the fake grave beside the house. They did so because they wanted you to abandon hope of seeing me again. I have been looking for you since the start of spring. I am lucky enough to come across you here. I have moved out to live in a spacious and clean house in a quiet lane in the town. Would you come with me to my place?" Delighted at the invitation, the three young men dismounted from their horses and walked with the girl to her house, where they drank until late at night. The young squire Wu did not go home with the other two young men. Instead, he stayed with the girl for the night.

After three months living with the girl, Wu became a wan and sallow man. His father was quite angry with the Zhao brothers, saying, "To what place have you lured my son recently? Look how sick and weak he is! I will take you to court if anything untoward should happen to him." The two brothers were frightened into a cold sweat. They looked at each other and began to feel there must be something fishy about the girl. Knowing that a Daoist priest named Huangfu was good at exorcising goblins, they sent for him to have a look at Wu. As soon as Wu was brought to his presence, the Daoist priest exclaimed in surprise, "You have been deeply possessed by a ghost. Go westward three hundred *li* at once to escape from its pursuit. If the evil spirit has lived with you for one hundred and twenty days, you will be doomed to die and there will be no way of saving you."

The three men hastily set off on their journey towards the western capital, Luoyang. On the way wherever they stopped for food and rest, the girl would appear in their room and when time came for sleep, she would lie in Wu's bed. The one hundred and twentieth day finally came shortly after their arrival in Luoyang. That day, the three young men met in a restaurant to have their last meal. They all looked worried and terrified about the impending danger. Much to their relief, however, they saw Huangfu passing the restaurant on the back of a donkey. They rushed out and bowed to him for help. Huangfu then built a platform on which he could exercise his magical power. He gave a sword to Wu, saying, "I'm afraid that you will not live to see tomorrow. But it might be still worth trying something. Go back to your room in the hotel and close the door and window tight. At dusk, someone will knock at the door. Don't ask who it is but just throw your sword at it. If you are lucky enough to kill the ghost, you might have a chance of survival, but if you are unlucky and kill a man other than the ghost, you will have to pay with your life. Although you might not be able to escape death either way, it is better to kill than to be killed."



Wu returned to the hotel and shut the door behind him as instructed. Sure enough he heard a knock on the door when dusk fell. Holding the sword in his hand, he dashed at the person, who slumped to the ground immediately. In the candlelight, he saw a girl lying in blood.

Wu, the Zhao brothers and Master Huangfu were caught on the spot by night patrolling soldiers and thrown into prison. When they were taken to court for trial, the prefecture governor found the case too hard for him to decide. So he sent an officer to the girl's house near the pond in the capital. "She has died," the girl's parents said to the officer. He then had the grave opened to check and found no trail of the dead body in it but just the girl's clothes left over like snake's sloughed skin. They were then set free having being proved innocent.

#### Tale 45. Mao Lie Tried in Hell

Mao Lie, a native of Zhaoshi Village, Hejiang County of Luozhou Prefecture, accumulated great wealth by force and trickery. He could not bear to see other people own fertile fields and live in good houses, and would try every means to take them over. He would never give up until their properties fell into his hands.

Chen Qi, a native of Changzhou, was a good friend of Mao Lie's. Qi had three younger brothers. For fear that his three young brothers should ask for a division of the properties after they grew up, he mortgaged all the farmland to Mao Lie for thousands of strings of coins. His mother, however, made a will that all the family's properties be divided among her four sons after her death. Chen Qi had no choice but go to see Mao Lie with money to redeem the mortgage. Lie took in the money but had no intention of giving back the fields Chen Qi had left with him as a pledge. He asked Qi to come several days later for his title deed.

"It would be fine if I could recover the title deed," said Qi. "I want nothing more than that."

"Well, we're good friends," said Lie, assuring him, "Take my word for it."

So Qi left without a slightest doubt about his sincerity. A few days later when Qi came again for the title, Lie hid himself somewhere, and refused to see him. Qi then brought him to court. The presiding judge had taken bribes from Lie, so he said, "Show me your title deed if you claim your land. How can you have made so big a deal without signing a contract? I'll report the case to the county magistrate for him to decide."

The county magistrate believed in the one-sided story of the corrupt judge. He dismissed the case as groundless, and had Qi beaten in court for bringing a false accusation against an innocent person. Qi appealed for a re-examining of his case to the prefecture governor, who turned down his request. He did not give in and made an appeal to the province governor, who overruled his appeal, too. Not until then did he turn to gods and spirits for justice. He presented sacrificial offerings to a temple god, and that night he dreamed of the god telling him that this case was beyond his ken, and suggesting that he go to the Lord of Mt. Tai's Temporary Palace and plead with him to review the case.

Qi went to the palace as instructed by the temple god in the dream. He was waiting in the palace hall to be granted an audience when he heard a voice coming from behind heavy curtains and light streamers, saying, "Come tonight!" Qi turned around and went out of the hall as told. When night fell, he came back and put a plaint on a long and narrow table in the hall. At this moment, the voice said to him again, "You can go home now." So he went out and made his way home. It was the twentieth day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Shaoxing Period.

Three days after Qi came home, a man in yellow broke into Mao Lie's house and went straight to hit him on the chest. Lie ran away from his house for life, but met his death after he returned home days later. In the days that followed, Lie's middleman and the corrupt judge died one after another. At last, death fell on Chen Qi, but he soon came back to life, saying to his family, "I'll be brought into confrontation with Mao Lie in Hell Court. Just keep vigil beside my body. Don't put it into the coffin."

Qi was brought to court to confront Lie and the middleman. Lie claimed that he had not received a single penny from Qi, and nor did he keep Qi's title deed. A court officer pointed at Lie's heart, saying, "Evidence is here." He took out a mirror, pointed it at his heart, and the scene where Lie and his wife took money from Qi was vividly reflected on the mirror. "Seeing is believing. What else can you say?" said the officer. Lie was then tied up and taken to the trial hall, where a man in royal robe sat high in the front with many guards and soldiers lining on both sides. At sight of Mao Lie, the man flew into a rage, and ordered

that he be given a good beating. For fear of being beaten to death, Mao Lie pleaded guilty. The man in royal robe pronounced the verdict that the county magistrate was to be dismissed from his office for his failure to performing his duty properly, the houses of the corrupt officer and the middleman burnt down, and their life in the living world reduced by half." After the pronouncement of the verdict, an order was issued for guards to take Mao Lie out. With tears running down his cheeks, he said to Qi, "There will never be any chance of my going home in this life to see my family. Tell my wife to offer sacrifice as much as she can to Buddha for me. Your title deed is kept in my cupboard. In my lifetime, I've seized farming fields by fraud from thirteen people. Their title deeds are all kept at the bottom of the moneybox in my room. Please call the thirteen people together and compensate for their loss to atone for my crimes."

After Lie was carried away, the man in royal robe gave an order for the middleman to be brought in. He pleaded for mercy, saying, "I never expected such a thing would happen when I was invited to be the middleman." So he and Qi were both released. On their way home, they passed rows upon rows of houses of prison. Their escort pointed to these houses, telling them where murderers were jailed, where unfilial sons and daughters jailed, where wizards and sorcerers jailed, and where liars and blasphemers jailed. Since the times of Zhou and Qin, all mortals had been taken here after their death to stand their trials no matter whether they were rich or poor, or of a noble birth or a humble birth, and nobody could have been an exception. He then turned to Qi, saying, "You've been here for seven days. You must go home at once."

He returned home sound and safe, feeling as if he had just woken up from a dream. He sent his son to see what had happened to the house of the corrupt officer, and was told that the house had been burned to ashes. He was also told that the middleman had been burnt to death three days before. He went over to see Mao's wife, and told what her husband had said to him in Hell. Mao Lie's son handed the title deed to Qi as his father had instructed from the nether world. That evening, the middleman came to Mao's home. He complained grudgingly while beating the door with great force, "I've got into trouble because of your father. Although I've been released from hell, my body has been destroyed in the fire. Where can I accommodate myself?"

Mao's wife answered, "As things stand, I can do nothing except serve and worship Buddha more."

The middleman said, "I've been exempted from death and released from Hell, but I can't return to my former self. I've got pardoned in Hell, but a pardon from Hell can't help me much in this world. I have to undergo great sufferings until the end of my life in this world. Only after that can I have a chance of being reincarnated. I'll go nowhere but just stand here keeping the door." From then on, he would come and stand by the door when evening came. Later on, his voice became more and more distant, and finally disappeared after saying, "Thanks to you, I'm returning to myself." However, he never recovered his body. Mao's wife aged quickly and soon joined her husband in Hell.

#### Tale 46. A Lad Named Zhang Enters the Netherworld

In the village of Hanzhou south of Pingyu County, there was an old man named Zhang, who lived on catching quails and was therefore nicknamed Quail. His wife gave birth to a son when he was very old, but the boy did not live long. The old heartbroken couple cried sadly over the death of their son. They would rather join their son in the nether world at the thought of being left with nobody in this world to depend on in their remaining years.

The next day, they set out to prepare for a funeral for their son although they hated to see him buried in a grave. They built of bricks a tomb about one or two feet under the ground. It was too hard for the old man to accept the fact that his son died so young. "He is not dead," he said to the people around, "He is still alive!" People laughed at him, thinking he must have gone mad, but there were still some other people who could understand him and felt really sorrow for his losing the son.

Three days after the burial, the old couple went to the tomb again, wailing downheartedly when suddenly they heard groans coming from the tomb. Surprised at the sound, his wife said, "It must be that the soul has returned to the body of our son." They removed the bricks, and pulled out the coffin to see their son coming back to life. The boy came home with his parents. When he got home, the boy asked for a bowl of soup and porridge, and then he began to tell his parents what had happened to him in Hell.

"When I was taken to the Hell Court," the boy said, "I cried and appealed to the presiding judge for mercy, begging him to let me go home to take care of my old parents. I promised to him that once I



fulfilled my duty as a son to hold a funeral for my parents after their death, I would come back to stand trial without any regret. The judge in Hell commiserated with me, so he said, 'You now have my permission to return alive to your parents today. Tell your parents to stop catching and killing birds, and your life will be lengthened.'

The father immediately set a fire to his bird-catching nets, and burnt all of them down to ashes. He then took his son to a temple to serve Buddha. In the temple there was a handsome-looking monk by the name of Lü. He was under forties but had once been put in charge of prefecture trading affairs before converting to Buddhism.

At the sight of Monk Lü, the boy went up and asked, "Have you been raised from dead as well?"

Lü got confused, saying, "I've never died before. How can you say that to me?"

The boy answered, "When I was taken to the Hell Court for trial, I saw you chained with iron ropes to a bronze column while bailiffs came up in turn to beat you under one of your armpits with a club, and I saw blood dripping from your body. After they decided to release me, I asked one bailiff why you were put to torture like that. He said that you had been always missing certain essential parts of the scriptures while praying to Buddha."

Monk Lü got frightened at what the boy had said. He had suffered from a running sore under an armpit, which the new comer could not have known. Lü then moved into a clean room, chanting scriptures without missing a single word day and night. Three years later, the sore under the armpit healed up.

#### Tale 47. A Story of Shenyang Cave

Li Sheng, whose other name was Li Defeng, was a young man from Longxi Prefecture of twenty-five years old. He excelled in horsemanship and archery and distinguished himself in bravery and courage. In spite of all this, he was still despised by his countrymen because he was not good at farming work. One year during the Tianli Period, he went to Guizhou to seek refuge with the prefecture supervisor, who was one of his father's friends. Unexpectedly, however, when he arrived, he discovered that the supervisor had died. Homeless and penniless, he was driven to the brink of despair. In order to fill his stomach, he went hunting in the mountains. Day in and day out, he roved the woods and crossed the streams shooting beasts and birds, from which he derived great pleasure.

There was an old man named Qian, who ranked among the richest in that region. Qian had only one daughter, aged seventeen. He doted on her very much and kept her from going outside for fear of incurring harms and hazards. Even his relatives and neighbours could barely had a chance to see her. On a rainy, gloomy night, the girl was found missing but the doors and windows were locked as usual, and nobody could tell where she had gone. Qian reported it to the governor at once. He prayed to gods and deities of Heaven and Earth and in the meanwhile he had men look for his daughter high and low but no traces of her were found. The old man was so worried about his daughter that he offered a reward of half of his properties and his daughter to anyone who could tell where she was. Six months had passed but nothing came of their efforts to search, no matter how hard they tried.

One day, Li Sheng went out of town with his bow and arrows carried on the back. A river deer came into his sight. He ran after it all the way through mountains and valleys but failed to catch up with it. It then became dark. To make matters worse, he lost his way in the mountain and did not know what to do. When night fell, all was enveloped in deep darkness. Occasionally from afar came the roars of tigers and the jabbers of monkeys. About one hour after midnight, he looked into the distance and saw an ancient temple perching on the top of the mountain. He headed towards it and soon arrived at the temple. He went inside and found the ground covered with thick dust, the walls falling apart and paw prints and claw prints clearly visible on the floor. He could not find a better place for himself then. So he decided to spend the night in the temple. Before he closed his eyes, he suddenly heard some sounds of speech coming towards him from afar. How could there be someone speaking so late at night deep in the mountain? He climbed over the banisters and crouched down between the columns, peeking outside through the gate. In no moment came in a group of strange-looking creatures headed by one wearing a mountain-shaped dark red hat, light yellow rope and a jade belt. With two red lanterns lighting the way in the front and dozens of soldiers following at his heels, he walked straight towards the altar and seated himself behind it. The followers immediately lined up on two sides with weapons in their hands. They looked like boars or she-monkeys although they all stood upright in awe like men.

"They must be demons or evil spirits", Li Sheng thought to himself. He took out his bow and arrow and aimed at the chieftain sitting behind the altar. The monster let out a cry of pain and ran out in panic before the others realised what had happened. Shocked at the sight, his followers jumped to their heels and fled out of the temple in great terror. They had gone but Li Sheng did not dare to close his eye to sleep until all returned to silence. When he woke up at daybreak, he found the altar stained with blood. He followed the bloody tracks out of the temple and walked about five *li* and arrived at an entrance to a cave on the southern side of a mountain. He came to a stop at the entrance, looking around when suddenly he slipped on the grass and fell into a pit thousands of *ren* deep. Looking up, he could not see the sky above. There seemed to be no way out and no chance of coming back alive. All of a sudden, he felt beneath his feet a way stretching out before him. It ran zigzag through a long corridor to a deep and dark place. Walking one hundred paces further, he found himself in front of a bright, spacious stone hall. Above the entrance to the hall hung a plate — 'The Cave of Shenyang'. A few soldiers, dressed like those he had seen the night before in the temple, stood guard at the door.

They were surprised at the sight of Li Sheng. "Who are you? How have you got here?" They asked.

"I'm an ordinary man in the world of mortals." Li Sheng answered. "I am a native of Longxi and I've lived by practising medicine. I went into the mountain to collect medical herbs. I'm a greedy man because I don't know when and where to stop gathering them. I was so careless that I slipped on the grass and fell into the cave. I would be grateful if you could forgive me for my rashness and rudeness."

"If you're a doctor," one of the guards said happily, "you must be able to give medical treatment."

"That's right." Li Sheng said.

"Thank Heaven!" They put their hands on their foreheads, crying in great delight.

"Why are you so happy?" Li Sheng got perplexed.

"Our lord, the Duke of Shenyang went out on an outing yesterday. He was wounded by a stray arrow and has been confined to bed since then. Your timely arrival must be the will of Heaven," they explained to Li Sheng while beckoning to him to sit down by the door. One of them immediately went inside to report Li's arrival to the Duke of Shenyang. Soon he came out with a word from the duke for Li Sheng: "I've cared little about food and health. Now I am seriously ill. But Heaven sent you to my cave to save my life. How lucky!"

Li Sheng was then led into a room brilliantly decorated with curtains. He saw an old macaque lying on a stone bed, moaning and groaning with pain. Three beautiful ladies were attending to him by the bedside. Li Sheng walked over and put one hand on his wrist to feel the pulse while examining the wound on the arm. After a while he said to the macaque, "There's nothing serious about your wound. I happen to have some elixir of life on me, which can not only cure you of your illness but also can enable you to rise to the Western Paradise as immortals." Li Sheng went on saying, "After taking my medicine, you can enjoy life as long as Heaven and survive the Sun, the moon and stars in the sky. It's the will of Heaven to have brought me to your presence!"

Then he took out the medicine and asked the macaque to take it. The magic effect of the medicine filled the other spirits present in the room with great envy. They bowed to Li Sheng, saying, "We're lucky enough to have a chance to meet you, a great immortal of great magic power. You have given our lord the elixir of life. Why can't we have just a taste of it?"

Li Sheng held out the medicine to them. Desperate not to miss the chance, they all scrambled for it. In fact, the medicine had been made extremely poisonous for hunting purpose. In tempering his metal arrowheads, Li Sheng would dip them in water mixed with the medicine. No wild beast could escape death once it was hit by the poisoned arrow. No wonder the bogeys all collapsed to the ground in an instant. Li Sheng looked around and found a double-edged sword hanging on the wall. He took it down and killed all the thirty-six spirits in the cave. When he walked over with the sword in his hand to the three ladies, they said, "We're human beings, not evil spirits. We've been seized and taken to this place. We would rather die than live here. Now that you've killed these evil spirits for us you're our second parent. How can we be disobedient to you?" Li Sheng then asked who they were and where they were from. From their answers, Li got to know that one of them was Qian's daughter and the other two girls were also from good families living not far away from the mountain.

Although Li Sheng had got rid of the demons and monsters in the cave, he could not get himself out of the place. He was feeling suffocated in the cave when suddenly a few old men wearing coarse fur cloaks, with long beards and black mouths, appeared before him from nowhere. The old man in white was pushed

to the front. He made a deep bow to Li Sheng, and said, "We are rat spirits. We have lived in this cave for many years until recently the evil macaques drove us out. Although we were no match for them in fight, we have never given up our hope of recapturing our home. For Heaven's sake, you've avenged us on our enemies today. How can't we be feeling grateful to you?" After he said this, all of them took out gold and precious stones from their long sleeves and handed them to Li Sheng.

"You're spirits with magic power. How could you resign yourselves to defeat and acknowledge your inferiority without rising against them?" Li asked them.

"We are five hundred year old spirits but they had eight hundred years of life. That's why we stood no chance of getting the better of them in a fight. Since we came to settle down in this cave, we have done nothing harmful to human residents around. Once we fulfil our Taoist practice here, we shall be able to rise to Heaven and travel freely through different skies. We're not like those macaque spirits, who have long been stepped in evil. It is the will of Heaven to have you uproot the entire macaque family. If it had not been the will of Heaven, you couldn't have got rid of these fierce bogeys on your own."

"The cave is named *Shenyang*. What does it mean?" Li Sheng asked.

"Monkeys belong to the *shen* type. They named the cave after their type to glorify themselves. But we have a different name for it."

"The cave is your home and I fell into it completely by chance. You have no need to thank me with gifts. I just wish you to point me the way out."

"There's nothing easier than this. Just close your eyes for a while please and then your wish will be realised."

So Li Sheng closed his eyes as he was told and immediately he heard thunderstorms roaring by his ears. When the storm died away, he opened his eyes to find a white rat leading the way in the front through the roadside. He helped the three young ladies out of the cave and took them to the Qian's home.

The old man was so glad to see his daughter come home alive that he married his daughter to Li Sheng at once. The other two ladies were also willing to be his concubines. Li Sheng thus became a man of great fortunes with three wives overnight. Afterwards, he made a visit to where he had fallen down, wishing to find the way leading to the cave. However, with the mountain all covered with lush grass and high trees, no traces of a road were visible.

#### Tale 48. The Mural

While staying in the capital, Meng Longtan of Jiangxi and Master of Letters Zhu once happened upon a monastery. Neither the shrine-hall nor the meditation room was very spacious, and only one old monk was found putting up within. Seeing the guests enter, the monk straightened up his clothes, went to greet them and showed them around the place. An image of Zen Master Baozhi stood in the shrine-hall. On either side wall were painted fine murals with lifelike human figures. The east wall depicted the Buddhist legend of "Heavenly Maidens Scattering Flowers." Among the figures was a young girl with flowing hair with a flower in her hand and a faint smile on her face. Her cherry-red lips were on the verge of moving, and the liquid pools of her eyes seemed to stir with wave-like glances. After gazing intently for some time, Zhu's self-possession began to waver and his thoughts grew so abstracted that he fell into a trance. His body went adrift as if floating on mist; suddenly he was inside the mural. Peak upon peak of palaces and pavilions make him feel as if he was beyond this earth. An old monk was preaching the *Dharma* on a dais, around which stood a large crowd of viewers in robes with their right shoulders bared out of respect. Zhu mingled in among them.

Before long, he felt someone tugging furtively at his sleeve. He turned to look, and there was the girl with flowing hair giving him a dazzling smile. She tripped abruptly away, and he lost no time following her along a winding walkway into a small chamber. Once there, he hesitated to approach any farther. When she turned her head and raised the flower with a beckoning motion, he went across to her in the quiet, deserted chamber. Swiftly he embraced her and, as she did not put up much resistance, they grew intimate. When it was over she told him not to make a sound and left, closing the door behind her. That night she came again. After two days of this, the girl's companions realised what was happening and searched together until they found the scholar.

"A little gentleman is already growing in your belly, but still you wear those flowing tresses, pretending to be a maiden," they said teasingly. Holding out hairpins and earrings, they pressured her to



put her hair up in the coiled knot of a married woman, which she did in silent embarrassment. One of the girls said, "Sisters, let's not out-stay our welcome." At this the group left all in a titter.

Looking at the soft, cloud-like chignon piled atop her head and her phoenix ringlets curved low before her ears, the scholar was more struck by her charms than when she had worn her hair long. Seeing that no one was around, he began to make free with her. As his heart throbbed at her pleasure, the heavy tread of leather boots was heard. A clanking of chains and manacles was followed by clamorous, arguing voices. The girl got up in alarm. Peering out, they saw an officer dressed in armour, his face black as lacquer, with chains in one hand and a mace in the other.

Standing around him were all the maidens. "Is this all of you?" asked the officer. "We're all here," they answered. "Report if any of you are concealing a man from the lower world. Don't bring trouble on yourselves." "We aren't," said the maidens in unison. The officer turned around and looked malevolently in the direction of the chamber, giving every appearance of an intention to search it. The girl's face turned pale as ashes in fear. "Quick, hide under the bed" she told Zhu in panic. She opened a little door in the wall and was gone in an instant. Zhu lay prostrate, hardly daring to take a little breath. Soon he heard the sound of boots stamping into, then back out of, the room. Before long, the din of voices gradually receded. He regained some composure, though the sound of passers-by discussing the matter could be heard frequently outside the door. After cringing there for quite some time, he heard ringing in his ears and felt a burning ache in his eyes. Though the intensity of these sensations threatened to overwhelm him, there was no choice but to listen quietly for the girl's return. He was reduced to the point that he no longer recalled where he had been before coming there.

Just then his friend Meng Longtan, who had been standing in the shrine-hall, found that Zhu had disappeared in the blink of an eye. Perplexed, he asked the monk what had happened. "He has gone to hear a sermon on the *Dharma*," said the monk laughingly. "Where?" asked Meng. "Not far" was the answer. After a moment, the monk tapped on the wall with his finger and called, "Why do you tarry so long, my good patron?" Presently there appeared on the wall an image of Zhu standing motionless with his head cocked to one side as if listening to something. "You have kept your travelling companion waiting a long time," called the monk again. Thereupon he drifted out of the mural and down to the floor. He stood woodenly, his mind like burned-out ashes, with eyes staring straight ahead and legs wobbling. Meng was terribly frightened, but in time calmed down enough to ask what had happened. It turned out that Zhu had been hiding under the bed when he heard a thunderous knocking, so he came out of the room to listen for the source of the sound.

They looked at the girl holding the flower and saw, instead of flowing hair, a high coiled chignon on her head. Zhu bowed down to the old monk in amazement and asked the reason for this. "Illusion is born in the mind. How can a poor mendicant like myself explain it?" laughed the monk. Zhu was dispirited and cast down; Meng was shaken and confused. Together they walked down the shrine-hall steps and left.

The chronicler of the Tales comments: " 'Illusion is born in the mind.' These sound like the word of one who has found the truth. A wanton mind gives rise to a state of fear. The Bodhisattva made it possible for ignorant persons to attain realisation for themselves. All the myriad transformations of illusion are nothing but the movements of the human mind itself. The old monk spoke in earnest solicitude, but regrettably there is no sign that the youth found enlightenment in his words and entered the mountains with hair unbound to seek the truth."

#### Tale 49. The Taoist Priest of Lao Mountain

In our district lived scholar Wang, the seventh son of an old family. From youth onward he was attracted to Taoist arts. Hearing that immortals abounded on Lao Mountain, he packed his books on his back and set out there on an adventure. Climbing to the top of a peak, Wang came to a Taoist temple set in a wild, secluded spot. A Taoist with white hair hanging past his collar was sitting on a bast mat. He had about him an other-worldly air that was graceful and lofty. Scholar Wang made obeisance to him and struck up a conversation. The Taoist's talk impressed him as quite mysterious and subtle. Wang asked to be accepted as his disciple, to which he replied, "I'm afraid you are too soft and lazy to work hard."

"Oh, but I can," answered Wang. The Taoist had a crowd of acolytes, all of whom came together at dusk. Having saluted each of them, Wang settled down in the hermitage.

At the crack of dawn the Taoist woke Wang, gave him an axe and made him go to gather firewood with the others. Wang did exactly as he was told. After more than a month of this, his hands and feet had calluses on top of calluses. Unable to bear the toil, he nursed secret intentions of returning home. One evening on his return he saw two men drinking with his master. The sun had already set but no lamps or candles had yet been lit, so the master cut paper in the shape of a mirror and pasted it on the wall. Suddenly a light as bright as the moon's flooded the room, making even the thinnest hairs visible. The acolytes in attendance ran back and forth at the guests' bidding. One of the guests said, "It's a beautiful night for good times. We ought to share them with everyone here." The Taoist picked up a pitcher of wine from the table and began to pour some for each acolyte, urging them to drink their fill. Wang thought to himself: "How can a pitcher of wine suffice for seven or eight people?" Each of them hunted up a drinking vessel. They vied to see who would be first to drain his cup. Their only fear was that the pitcher was empty, but when they went to pour from it again they were astonished to find that the wine had not gone down in the slightest. Soon another guest said, "You have been nice enough to give us moonlight to drink by, but there is still no entertainment. Why don't you call the goddess of moon to come?" At this the Taoist tossed a chopstick into the moon and a beautiful woman appeared out of the circle of light. At first she was not even a foot tall, but she grew to normal size as she descended to the floor. Her slender waist and graceful neck moved through the fluttering gyrations of the Dance of the Rainbow Skirt and Feathered Blouse. To the tempo of the dance she sang,

Immortal of the mountains  
Is it true you're bound for home  
Will you leave me all alone  
In this icy crystal dome?

Her silvery voice was as piercing as a flute. At the end of the song she arose with a sweeping motion, jumped up on the table and, in the space of an astonished glance, was already a chopstick again. The three men laughed boisterously.

The other guest spoke up: "This evening has been wonderful, but the wine is getting the better of me. Would it be all right if we had a farewell drink in the place of the moon?" The three men moved their mats and slowly floated into the moon. The acolytes saw the three seated in the moon drinking, their features distinct as reflections in a mirror. After a time the moon gradually dimmed. When the acolytes brought a lighted candle they found the Taoist sitting alone, his guests nowhere to be seen. The delicacies on the table were just as before, and the moon on the wall was nothing more than a disc of paper.

"Did you have enough to drink?" the Taoist asked the acolytes.

"Enough" they said.

"Then you ought to go right to bed. Don't let this interfere with gathering wood and kindling."

The acolytes said "yes" and retired.

Wang's intention of leaving subsided out of heartfelt admiration. But after another month had passed the grinding toil became too much for him, and the Taoist would not pass on even a single magical technique. Unable to wait any longer, Wang took his leave, saying: "I came a hundred miles to study under such an immortal master as yourself. Even though I cannot learn the art of everlasting life, there may perhaps be some small skill you could impart that would appease my wish for learning. For the past two or three months all I have done is go out to gather wood in the morning and return in the evening. When I was at home, I was not used to this kind of hard work."

The Taoist answered with a laugh: "I said from the start that you would not be able to stand hard work, and you have proved me right. I will send you off tomorrow morning."

"I have laboured for many days. If you could just impart some insignificant part of your art, my coming would not be in vain." The Taoist asked what he hoped to learn.

Wang answered, "I have often noticed that walls are no hindrance to your free motion. I would be satisfied to learn the method of such magic."

The Taoist gave his assent with a laugh. Then he taught Wang the words of a spell and told him to chant it through by himself, at which he cried, "Go through." Wang faced the wall, not daring to walk into it. Again the Taoist cried, "Try to go through it!" Doing as he was told, Wang gingerly approached the wall, but it proved unyielding to his forward movement.

"Lower your head and go through quickly. Don't hold back," instructed the Taoist. So Wang backed several steps away from the wall and ran toward it. When he came to the wall it seemed not to be there at all. Turning around to look, he found that he was already outside the building. Overjoyed, he went back to thank his master. The Taoist said, "You must be careful with the use of the magical trick, or the spell will not work." Then he gave Wang money for the trip home and sent him off.

Upon reaching home Wang boasted that he had met with an immortal and that now his power was such that no solid wall could stop him. His wife found this hard to believe. Wang stood several feet from a wall and ran headlong against it as he had done before, but this time his head smacked against the hard wall and he tumbled backward. His wife helped him up and looked at the goose egg rising mound-like on his forehead. Shamed but incited by her ridicule into a fury, he raved that the old Taoist was nothing but a reprobate.

The Chronicler of the Tales comments: "No one who hears of this incident can keep from laughing out loud, but those who laugh do not realise that the Scholar Wang of this world are by no means few and far between. Take the case of a worthless official who would 'rather swallow poison than medicines.' A 'boil-sucking, haemorrhoid-licking' sort of person might cater to his wishes by advocating brutal self-aggrandising policies and inveigle him, saying: 'You need only adhere to such and such a policy-nothing will stand in your way.' The first time he tries, it might yield some small measure of success, thus giving him the idea that such policy can be applied to all cases under heaven. Those who are taken by this will not stop until they run headlong into a solid wall and topple over backward."

#### 50. Fox-Fairy Jiaona

Scholar Kong Xueli, a descendant of Confucius, was poised in manner and accomplished in poetry. A close friend who served as magistrate of Tiantai district summoned him by letter. Kong arrived only to find that the magistrate had just died. This left him down-and-out and without the means to return, so he put up in Potala Monastery, where he was employed copying sutras for the monks. The residence of one Master Shan lay a hundred-some steps to the west of the monastery. Master Shan, the scion of a gentry family, had moved to the country with his reduced household, leaving the residence vacant, after being involved in a lawsuit which had brought on the decline of his fortunes. One day while walking through the swirling eddies of a heavy snowfall, Scholar Kong happened to pass by the gate. A young man, quite striking in manner, was issuing from the gate when he saw Scholar Kong, and hurried over to greet him. Having expressed concern for Kong's health in a few words, he begged to have the honour of receiving him as a visitor. Delighted at the young man's refreshing charm, Kong followed him in with alacrity. The rooms were hardly spacious, but brocade draperies hung everywhere. A number of paintings and works of calligraphy by ancient masters were on the walls. On the desk lay a volume bearing the title *Random Notes from the Land of Langhuan*. A quick glance through showed it to be full of things never seen in other books.

Because the young man occupied the Shan residence, Kong assumed him to be master of the house and did not inquire about his family's social standing. The young man questioned Kong at length about the life he led and was moved to pity by what he heard. He suggested setting up a private schoolhouse and finding some pupils. Kong sighed and said, "Who would vouch for a wanderer like me?"

"I would like to study under you, if you still find some redeeming value in a worthless nag like myself."

Delighted as he was, Kong could not presume to act as the young man's tutor, so he asked that they be bound by friendship instead. Kong went on to ask: "Why has your house been boarded up all this time?"

"This is the Shan manor," replied the young man. "The owner moved to the country and left the place empty quite some time ago. I belong to the Huangfu clan, which has its ancestral home in Shaanxi. I am using this as a temporary resting-place because my family dwelling was destroyed by wildfire. Only then did Scholar Kong realise that his friend was not one of the Shans

That evening the two of them conversed merrily, after which they shared the young man's sleeping mat. Just before dawn, a servant boy lit a charcoal fire in the room. The young man got up first and went into the inner quarters, while Kong sat huddled under the covers. The servant came in to say that the old gentleman was coming. Kong got up in surprise. A silver-headed old man entered and graciously thanked Kong, saying: "You have been kind enough not to spurn my thick-headed son, and you have even offered



him the benefit of your teaching. My boy is just now learning to scribble. Don't treat him as an equal just because you are friends. "Saying this, he presented Kong with a figured gown, a mink cap, and a pair each of shoes and stockings. He watched until Kong finished washing his face and combing his hair, then called for wine and victuals to be set out before him. The furnishings of the room and the host's clothing were of unfamiliar materials that dazzled the eyes with their lustre. After several rounds of wine the old man rose, took his leave and walked out leaning on his cane.

At the end of the meal the young gentleman brought out his exercises, all of which were written in classic style. There was not one example of up-to-date examination writing among them. When Kong questioned him on this he answered with a laugh: "I am not out to climb the ladder of success." As evening approached, he filled the wine cups again and said, "Let's enjoy ourselves to the full tonight: starting tomorrow there will be no more of this." He called to the servant boy: "See whether the old gentleman is in bed yet. If he is, call Xiangnu in here, and keep it quiet." The boy left, then returned with an embroidered bag containing a four-string lute. In a moment a maid entered, looking as stunning as could be in her colourful adornments. The young gentleman told her to play the piece called "Goddesses of the River Xiang." Strumming the strings with an ivory pick, she played an intense and passionate melody to a rhythm unlike anything Kong had ever heard. Then she was ordered to serve wine in huge beakers. Only when the third watch came did they call it a night.

The next day they rose early to study together. The young gentleman was exceptionally bright, with the ability to memorise a passage simply by running his eyes over it. After two or three months his command of the ink-brush was thoroughly remarkable. They agreed to drink together once every five days and did not fail to summon Xiangnu to each bout. One night Kong, felling his desire kindled by the mellowness of wine, let his eyes linger on her. The young gentleman grasped what was on his mind immediately and said, "This maid was brought up as one of the family by my father. Seeing you forlorn and wifeless, I have turned the matter over in my mind day and night. Sooner or later I should arrange a beautiful mate for you."

"If you would be so kind, let it be someone like Xiangnu," blurred Kong. The young gentleman answered laughingly: "You certainly bear out the old saying that 'the inexperienced are easily excited.' If this is your idea of beauty, your wishes are indeed easily satisfied."

A half year had passed when one day Kong wanted to go rambling about the environs of the city, but when he reached the gate, he found that its double leaves had been bolted from the outside. When asked about it, the young gentleman told him: "The master of the house fears that socialising will distract me from my studies, so he is turning away all guests." This was readily accepted by Kong. That was at the height of the summer season — a time of sweltering heat—so they set up their studio in a pavilion in the garden. Soon afterwards a peach-sized swelling appeared on Kong's chest. After one night, it grew to the size of a bowl and made him cry out in anguish. The young gentleman looked after him constantly, neglecting to eat and sleep. In a few days the pain from the boil became increasingly grievous, so that eating and drinking were now out of the question. The old gentleman, too, came out for a look and heaved a great sigh at what he saw.

"The night before last I was worrying about my tutor's affliction," said the young gentleman. "It occurred to me that sister Jiaona could cure it, so I sent someone to granny's place to bring her. After all this time why hasn't she arrived?" At that moment the servant boy came in to say, "Miss Jiaona had arrived. Auntie and Miss Song are with her." Father and son rushed into the inner quarters. In a short while they ushered in a girl to have a look at the scholar. She was around thirteen or fourteen years of age, her eyes were coy pools darting with brilliance and her slender-willow frame figured forth loveliness in its every attitude. When he glimpsed her charms, the scholar abruptly left off his moaning and his spirits revived. Then the young gentleman spoke: "This is my good friend. We are closer than if we had been born of the same parents. Try your best to treat him, sister."

At this the girl dispensed with her look of bashfulness and walked toward the bed to make an examination, trailing her long sleeves through the air. As she probed with her fingers, Kong was aware of a fragrance that surpassed orchids. "No wonder he has this affliction," said the girl laughingly. "His pulse is unsteady. The illness is critical, but it can be cured. However, this area of tissue is already moribund. Our only choice is to remove the skin and cut away the flesh." Whereupon she removed a bracelet from her arm, placed it on the afflicted spot and pressed down gradually. The boil bulged more than an inch out of the bracelet, and the base of the swelling was completely contained within. No longer was it as wide in

diameter as a bowl. Then the girl lifted the front of her gossamer gown with one hand and unfastened a knife with a razor-thin blade, which hung at her waist. Holding the bracelet and grasping the knife firmly, she cut gently along the base. Purple blood spilled out in gouts, staining the bed mat. But the scholar, in his craving for proximity to her soft liveliness, was not only unaware of the pain but even apprehensive lest the operation end too soon and put a stop to their nearness. Before long a lump of putrefied flesh, resembling a gall cut from a tree, was sliced away. The girl then called for water, which she used to cleanse the incision. She expelled a red lozenge the size of a crossbow pellet from her mouth and placed it on the raw flesh, then pressed downward and rolled it around the wound. When it had made one circuit, the scholar felt heat darting like flame. When the lozenge had rolled around the second time, the spot pulsed with a comfortable itching sensation. At the end of the third circuit a refreshing coolness flooded through his body and penetrated to the very marrow of his bones. The girl put the lozenge back into her throat, announced "He is cured!" and walked away with rapid steps. The scholar leapt up and ran to thank her, as if he had never been stricken by a serious malady. After that her glorious countenance hovered before his mind's eye: his painful yearning was not to be dispelled. From this time on he neglected his books and sat in fond vapidness. Nothing further could engage his attention.

The young gentleman, who had seen into the root of his unease, said, "I did some judicious looking, and I've settled on the perfect mate for you."

"Who?" asked the scholar.

"She is also a member of my family."

The scholar absorbed himself in considering this for quite some time, but he firmly said, "No need." Turning his face to the wall he recited:

These streams seem nothing since I've crossed  
the vastness of the sea;  
None other than Witch Mountain mists  
are truly clouds to me.

The young gentleman knew what he was getting at and said, "My father had the highest regard for your great abilities and has long wished to attach himself to you through marriage. But I have only this one younger sister: she is too tender in years. I do have a cousin named A Song who is eighteen years old and by no means of coarse mould. If you don't believe me, wait in the front chamber. Cousin Song takes a stroll through the garden every day, so you can get a look at her." The scholar did as he was told. Sure enough, he saw Jiaona come by in the company of another beautiful girl, whose jet eyebrows arched like moth antennae and whose lotus feet strode along in upturned phoenix slippers. She was every bit a match for Jiaona. The delighted scholar asked the young gentleman to help him tie the knot.

On the next day the young gentleman came out to the garden and congratulated him, saying: "It's all arranged." The rooms around a side courtyard were then made ready, and the scholar's wedding ceremony was performed. That evening the place resounded to the beating of drums and the blaring of horns till the air rolled with dust. Now that the fairy maid of his dreams was about to share his canopy and quilt, he suspected that the Palace of Vast Coldness, where dwelt the goddess of the moon, was not necessarily beyond the clouds. After they had drunk together from the paired goblet of matrimony, they revealed deeply in the joy that answered to their longing.

One night the young gentleman said to the scholar: "I can never forget the kindness you showed by instructing me. But recently young Master Shan returned, following the resolution of his lawsuit, and now he insists on taking up residence here again. I think I'll leave this place and go west. Things being as they are, it will be difficult for us to remain together: You must know how the sorrow of parting tugs at my heart." The scholar wished to leave with him, but the young gentleman urged him to return to his home district. The scholar shrank back from the difficulty of doing so.

"Don't worry," said the young gentleman. "I'll see you off at once." Before long, the gentleman led out Mistress Song and presented the scholar with one hundred taels of gold. The young gentleman clasped the couple with both his arms and cautioned them to close their eyes, and keep them closed. They went driftingly airborne, aware only of the wind rushing in their ears. "We've arrived," said the young gentleman after a long while. They opened their eyes and found that they had indeed come to the scholar's old neighbourhood. It was plain by now that the young gentleman was no ordinary mortal. The scholar

knocked delightedly on the door of his house. When his mother came out she could not believe her eyes. Then she met the scholar's wife, and the three of them rejoiced together. When they thought to turn and look behind them, the young gentleman was already gone.

Mistress Song proved filial to her mother-in-law. She was renowned for her ravishing good looks and wifely virtue. Afterwards the scholar took the doctorate of letters and was assigned the judgeship at Yan'an. He took his household with him and went to assume his post, but his mother remained behind because of the great distance involved. Mistress Song gave birth to a son, whom they named Xiaohuan.

Then the scholar gave offence to the censor, which resulted in the loss of his position. Because there were some unresolved problems relating to his dismissal, he was unable to return home. It happened that he was hunting in the wilds outside the city when he came upon a handsome young man sitting on a black colt, who kept glancing at him. A careful look told him that this was the young gentleman of the Huangfu family. The young gentleman drew back on the reins and pulled up the three-horse team hitched to his chariot, overcome by the mixture of sorrow and gladness that welled up within him. He asked the scholar to follow him along to a village, where the shade cast by many trees cut off sun and sky and created a dense twilight. The door leading into the house had bronze bosses and studs in the style of a landowner's mansion. In response to the scholar's questions the young gentleman said that his younger sister had gotten married and his mother had passed away. The scholar expressed heartfelt condolences. After staying the night he left, then returned with his wife.

Jiaona also showed up. She hugged the scholar's son, dandled him in her arms and poked fun at him, saying, "Look how my cousin has diluted our bloodline!" The scholar bowed down to thank her for past kindness. "Brother-in-law, you are an exalted personage now," she answered with a laugh. "Your wound is long healed: haven't you forgotten the pain by now?" Master Wu, the younger sister's husband, also came to pay his respects, then departed after a two-night stay.

One day the young gentleman came to the scholar with a troubled expression on his face and said, "Heaven is about to inflict grave calamity upon us. Can you find it in yourself to save us?" The scholar had no knowledge of what he had to deal with, nevertheless, he believed himself equal to the attempt. The young gentleman hurried out and summoned his whole family into the hall, where they lined up to make obeisance to him. The dismayed scholar anxiously asked for an explanation.

"I am a fox spirit, not a human being," said the young gentleman. "We are now faced with a cataclysm of thunder and lightning. If you consent to take the risk of rescuing us, my family has a hope of surviving. Otherwise, please take your child and leave; we will not involve you." The scholar vowed to live or die with them. The young gentleman had him stand with sword in hand at the gate, and warned him: "When lightning strikes, do not move!" The scholar took his assigned position. Soon storm-clouds as dusky black as basalt turned day into night. Turning to look at the house where he had been staying, he saw that that gate was no longer there. Instead, there stood a great mound rearing upward, pierced by the gaping mouth of a huge cave. He was standing in astonished dread when—"CRACK"—the air was split by a peal of thunder that shook the very mountains. Demented winds driving torrents of rain uprooted ancient trees. The scholar was blinded and deafened, but he planted his feet and stood firm. Suddenly a sharp-beaked, taloned monster appeared out of the wind-whipped convolutions of a smoky black cloud. It dragged a person out of the cave, then rose directly with the dense vapour. In the one flashing glimpse that the scholar caught of the person's shoes and clothes, he was struck by the thought that this was Jiaona. He leapt into the air and thrust with his sword, bringing the monster down to the ground. At that instant the sky tore open with crashing thunder. The scholar fell over and expired. In a short time the sky cleared, and Jiaona regained consciousness. Seeing the scholar dead beside her she sobbed, "What is life to me if Master Kong dies for me?" Mistress Song, too, came out, and they carried him back together. Jiaona made Mistress Song hold up his head and her brother pry apart his jaws with a metal hair clasp, while she herself pulled his mouth open by pinching his cheeks. She used her tongue to put the red elixir-lozenge in his mouth, and then, placing her lips against his, she blew it further in. When the red lozenge had been blown into his throat, he began to make a gurgling sound. In a while he came to himself. Seeing all his relatives before him made him realise that he had now awakened from a dream.

Once they had got over the shock of these events, everyone in the house rejoiced in their renewed togetherness. But the scholar decided that he could not stay long in such a cave, so he proposed that the others return with him to his home district. The hall echoed with exclamations of approval: only Jiaona was unhappy. The scholar suggested that she and Master Wu go along, but she worried that her in-laws

would not want to be separated from their young son. They discussed the matter most of the day without result. Just then a servant of the Wu family arrived, sweating profusely and gasping for breath. Everyone loosed a barrage of astonished questions. It turned out that calamity had struck Master Wu's house on the same day, and that the entire family had perished. Jiaona stamped her feet in grief and cried ceaselessly, while everyone tried to console her.

And so the plan to return together was agreed upon. The scholar went into the city for several days to attend to his affairs, then returned and stayed up into the night hurriedly packing for the trip. When they reached the scholar's home, he set up rooms for the young gentleman in an unfrequented garden, which he always locked from the outside. The bolt was only removed when he and Mistress Song arrived for a visit. The scholar played chess, wine and dined, and conversed with the young gentleman and his sister as if they all belonged to one family. The child Xiaohuan grew up to be splendidly good-looking, but there was something vulpine about him. People who saw him rambling about the city knew he was a fox spirit's child.

The Chronicler of the Tales comments: "I envy Scholar Kong not because he found a ravishing wife but because he found a bosom friend. Looking at the face of such a friend can make one forget hunger; listening to his voice can bring a smile. Simply having such a good friend and visiting him sometimes for a meal and conversation brings greater 'communion between souls' than does love's 'sweet disorder in the dress.'



## Appendix III

### A Table of Proppian Functions of *Dramatis Personae*

<i>Preparatory section</i>	
$\alpha$	initial situation
$\beta^1$	absentation (departure) of elders
$\beta^2$	death of parents
$\beta^3$	absentation (departure) of younger people
$\gamma^1$	interdiction
$\gamma^2$	order or command
$\delta^1$	interdiction violated
$\delta^2$	order or command carried out
$\varepsilon^1$	reconnaissance by the villain to obtain information about the hero
$\varepsilon^2$	reconnaissance by the hero to obtain information about the villain
$\varepsilon^3$	reconnaissance by other persons
$\zeta^1$	the villain receives information about the villain
$\zeta^2$	the hero receives information received by other means
$\zeta^3$	information received by other means
$\eta^1$	deceitful persuasions of the villain
$\eta^2$	application of magical agents by the villain
$\eta^3$	other forms of deception or coercion
$\theta^1$	the hero reacts to the persuasions of a villain
$\theta^2$	the hero mechanically falls victim to the influence of a magical agent
$\theta^3$	the hero gives in or reacts mechanically to the deceit of the villain
$\lambda$	preliminary misfortune caused by a deceitful agreement
<i>Villainy</i>	
A	villainy accompanied by casting into a chasm, etc.
*A	kidnapping of a person
A <sup>1</sup>	seizure of a magical agent or helper
A <sup>2</sup>	the forcible seizure of a magical helper
A <sup>ii</sup>	the ruining of crops
A <sup>3</sup>	theft of daylight
A <sup>4</sup>	plundering in various forms
A <sup>5</sup>	maiming, mutilation
A <sup>6</sup>	evocation of disappearance
A <sup>7</sup>	the bride is forgotten
A <sup>vii</sup>	demand for delivery or enticement, abduction
A <sup>8</sup>	expulsion
A <sup>9</sup>	casting into the sea
A <sup>10</sup>	the casting of a spell; a transformation
A <sup>11</sup>	false substitution
A <sup>12</sup>	an order to kill
A <sup>13</sup>	murder
A <sup>14</sup>	imprisonment, detention
A <sup>15</sup>	



- A<sup>16</sup> the threat of forced matrimony  
 A<sup>xvi</sup> the threat of forced matrimony between relatives  
 A<sup>17</sup> the threat of cannibalism  
 A<sup>xvii</sup> the threat of cannibalism among relatives  
 A<sup>18</sup> tormenting at night (vampirism)  
 A<sup>19</sup> declaration of war
- α Lack, Insufficiency*  
 α<sup>1</sup> lack of a bride, of an individual  
 α<sup>2</sup> lack of a helper or magical agent  
 α<sup>3</sup> lack of wondrous objects  
 α<sup>4</sup> lack of the egg of death (of love)  
 α<sup>5</sup> lack of money or the means of existence  
 α<sup>6</sup> lacks in other forms
- B Mediation, the connective incident*  
 B<sup>1</sup> call for help  
 B<sup>2</sup> dispatch  
 B<sup>3</sup> release; departure  
 B<sup>4</sup> announcement of misfortune in various forms  
 B<sup>5</sup> transportation of banished hero  
 B<sup>6</sup> condemned hero released, spared  
 B<sup>7</sup> lament or plaintive song
- C Consent to counteraction*
- ↑ *Departure, dispatch of the hero from home*
- D The first function of the donor*  
 D<sup>1</sup> test of the hero  
 D<sup>2</sup> greeting, interrogation  
 D<sup>3</sup> request for a favour after death  
 D<sup>4</sup> entreaty of a prisoner for freedom  
 D<sup>5</sup> entreaty of a prisoner for freedom, with preliminary imprisonment  
 D<sup>5</sup> request for mercy  
 D<sup>6</sup> request for division  
 d<sup>6</sup> argument without an expressed request for division  
 D<sup>7</sup> other requests  
 \*D<sup>7</sup> other requests, with preliminary helpless situation of the person making the request  
 d<sup>7</sup> helpless situation of the donor without a stated request; the possibility of rendering service  
 D<sup>8</sup> attempt to destroy  
 D<sup>9</sup> combat with a hostile donor  
 D<sup>10</sup> the offer of a magical agent as an exchange
- E Reaction of the hero (positive or negative)*  
 E<sup>1</sup> sustained ordeal  
 E<sup>2</sup> friendly response  
 E<sup>3</sup> favour to a dead person  
 E<sup>4</sup> freeing of a captive  
 E<sup>5</sup> mercy to a suppliant  
 E<sup>6</sup> separation of disputants  
 E<sup>vi</sup> deception of disputants  
 E<sup>7</sup> performance of some other service; fulfilment of a request; pious deeds

E <sup>8</sup>	attempt at destruction averted
E <sup>9</sup>	victory in combat
E <sup>10</sup>	deception in an exchange
F	<i>The acquisition, receipt of a magical agent</i>
F <sup>1</sup>	the agent is transferred
f <sup>1</sup>	the gift is of a material nature
Fneg (F-)	the agent is not transferred
Fcontr.(F=)	hero's negative reaction provokes cruel retribution
F <sup>2</sup>	the agent is pointed out
F <sup>3</sup>	the agent is prepared
F <sup>4</sup>	the agent is sold, purchased
F <sub>4</sub> <sup>3</sup>	the agent is made on order
F <sup>5</sup>	the agent is found
F <sup>6</sup>	the agent appears of its own accord
F <sup>vi</sup>	the agent appears from out of the earth
F <sub>9</sub> <sup>6</sup>	meeting with a helper who offers his service
F <sup>7</sup>	the agent is drunk or eaten
F <sup>8</sup>	the agent is seized
F <sup>9</sup>	the agent offers its services, places itself at someone's disposal
f <sup>9</sup>	the agent indicates it will appear of its own accord in some time of need
G	<i>Transference to a designated place; guidance</i>
G <sup>1</sup>	the hero flies through the air
G <sup>2</sup>	the hero rides, is carried
G <sup>3</sup>	the hero is led
G <sup>4</sup>	the route is shown to the hero
G <sup>5</sup>	the hero makes use of stationary means of communication
G <sup>6</sup>	a bloody trail shows the way
H	<i>The hero struggles with the villain</i>
H <sup>1</sup>	fight in an open field
H <sup>2</sup>	a contest, competition
H <sup>3</sup>	a game of cards
H <sup>4</sup>	weighing
I	<i>Victory over the villain</i>
I <sup>1</sup>	victory in open battle
*I <sup>1</sup>	victory by one hero while the other(s) hide
I <sup>2</sup>	victory or superiority in a contest
I <sup>3</sup>	winning at cards
I <sup>4</sup>	superiority in weighing
I <sup>5</sup>	killing of the villain without a fight
I <sup>6</sup>	expulsion of the villain
J	<i>Branding or marking the hero</i>
J <sup>1</sup>	application of a mark to the body
J <sup>2</sup>	the Transference of a ring or towel
K	<i>The liquidation of misfortune or lack</i>
K <sup>1</sup>	direct acquisition through the application of force or cunning
K <sup>i</sup>	the same, with one person compelling another to accomplish the acquisition in question
K <sup>2</sup>	acquisition accomplished by several helpers at once

K <sup>3</sup>	acquisition achieved with the help of an enticement or decoys
K <sup>4</sup>	liquidation of misfortune as the direct result of previous actions
K <sup>5</sup>	misfortune is done away with instantly through the use of a magical agent
K <sup>6</sup>	poverty is done away with through the use of a magical agent
K <sup>7</sup>	object of search is captured
K <sup>8</sup>	breaking of a spell
K <sup>9</sup>	resuscitation
K <sup>ix</sup>	the same, with the preliminary obtaining of the Water of Life
K <sup>10</sup>	release from captivity
KF	liquidation in form F, that is:
	KF <sup>1</sup> the object of a search is transferred;
	KF <sup>2</sup> the object of a search is pointed out, etc.

↓ *Return of the hero*

Pr	<i>Pursuit of the hero</i>
Pr <sup>1</sup>	flight through the air
Pr <sup>2</sup>	demand for the guilty person
Pr <sup>3</sup>	pursuit, accompanied by a series of transformations into animals
Pr <sup>4</sup>	pursuit, with transformations into enticing objects
Pr <sup>5</sup>	attempt to devour the hero
Pr <sup>6</sup>	attempt to destroy the hero
Pr <sup>7</sup>	attempt to gnaw through a tree

Rs	<i>Rescue of the hero</i>
Rs <sup>1</sup>	he is carried through the air or runs quickly
Rs <sup>2</sup>	he throws comb, etc., in the path of his pursuers
Rs <sup>3</sup>	fleeing, with transformation into a church, etc.
Rs <sup>4</sup>	fleeing, with concealment of the escapee
Rs <sup>5</sup>	concealment of the escapee by blacksmiths
Rs <sup>6</sup>	series of transformations into animals, plants and stones
Rs <sup>7</sup>	warding off of the temptation of enticing objects
Rs <sup>8</sup>	rescue or salvation from being devoured
Rs <sup>9</sup>	rescue or salvation from being destroyed
Rs <sup>10</sup>	leap to another tree

o *Unrecognized arrival*

L *Claims of a false hero*

M *Difficult task*

N *Solution( resolution) of a task*

\*N solution before a deadline

Q *Recognition of the false hero*

Ex *Exposure of the false hero*

T	<i>Transfiguration</i>
T <sup>1</sup>	new physical appearance
T <sup>2</sup>	the building of a place
T <sup>3</sup>	new garments

T <sup>4</sup>	humorous and rationalised forms
U	<i>Punishment of the false hero or villain</i>
U neg.	false hero or villain pardoned
W**	<i>Wedding and accession to the throne</i>
W*	wedding
W.	accession to the throne
w*	rudimentary form of marriage
w <sup>1</sup>	promised marriage
w <sup>2</sup>	resumed marriage
w <sup>0</sup>	monetary reward and other forms of material gain at the dénouement
X	<i>Unclear or alien forms</i>
<	<i>Leave-taking at a road marker</i>
Y	<i>Transmission of a signalling device</i>
mot.	<i>Motivations</i>
pos. or +	<i>Positive result for a function</i>
neg. or –	<i>Negative result for a function</i>
§	Connectives
...	Connectives trebled



## Appendix IV

### Functional Forms Peculiar to Chinese *Zhiguai* Tales

- $\beta^4$  Absentation (departure) of a person other than family members  
(eg. Tale 12, 26, 27, 28, 39, 43, 47, and 50)
- $\gamma^3$  Promise  
(eg. Tale 10, and 24)
- $\delta^3$  Promise broken  
(eg. Tale 10, and 24)
- $\delta^4$  Order or command disobeyed  
(eg. Tale 32)
- $\epsilon^i$  Reconnaissance by the villain to obtain information about a person other than the hero  
(eg. Tale 35)
- $\zeta^i$  Information obtained by the villain about a person other than the hero  
(eg. Tale 35)
- $\epsilon^{ii}$  Reconnaissance by the hero to obtain information about a person other than the villain  
(ed. Tale 18, and 30)
- $\zeta^{ii}$  Information obtained by the hero about a person other than the villain  
(ed. Tale 18, and 30)
- $\theta_{neg}$  The villain's deception fails or his/her trick does not work  
(eg. Tale 23, and 28)
- $A^{20}$  Maltreatment, physical abuse  
(eg. Tale 15, 16, 22, and 40)
- $A^{21}$  Sexual assault, verbal or physical  
(eg. Tale 15, and 31)
- $A^{22}$  Villainy in other forms  
(eg. Tale 12, 20, 38, 41, 44, and 45)
- $B^8$  Lacks or misfortunes are revealed in other forms  
(eg. Tale 21, and 35)
- $D^{11}$  The hero makes a marriage proposal in exchange for a magical agent  
(eg. Tale 5)
- $D^{12}$  The villain offers the hero a magical agent as part of a trick against him  
(eg. Tale 28)
- $E^{11}$  The donor agrees to the proposal and transfers the magical agent  
(eg. Tale 5)
- $E^{12}$  The hero accepts the magic agent and employs it immediately against the villain  
(eg. Tale 28)
- $E_{neg}$  The hero responds to the test in a negative way or fails to withstand the test  
(eg. Tale 19)
- $F_{vi}$  The agent appears from out of the water  
(eg. Tale 12)
- $F^{10}$  The hero acquires or receives a magic agent in other forms  
(eg. Tale 2)
- $G^7$  Other forms of transference  
(eg. Tale 48)
- $H^5$  The hero fights with the villain indoors  
(eg. Tale 7, 17, 22, 38, 44, and 47)
- $H^6$  They engage in a debate  
(eg. Tale 32)



- H<sup>7</sup> Struggle in other forms  
(eg. Tale 25)
- I<sup>v</sup> The villain is killed or wounded in the fight  
(eg. Tale 17, 27, 44, 50)
- I<sup>7</sup> The villain loses in the debate  
(eg. Tale 32)
- I<sup>8</sup> Victory over the villain in other forms  
(eg. Tale 25)
- J<sup>3</sup> The hero is branded or marked in other forms  
(eg. Tale 8, 38)
- K<sup>v</sup> Misfortunes or lacks are eliminated by the hero himself exercising magic power  
(eg. Tale 3, 6)
- K<sub>9</sub> Resuscitation in the form of the birth of a new from the dead body  
(eg. Tale 2)
- K<sub>ix</sub> Resuscitation in the form of the soul or ghost of the dead person making his/her presence and/or power felt  
(eg. Tale 15)
- K<sup>ix</sup> Resuscitation in other forms  
(eg. Tale 10)
- K<sup>11</sup> Liquidation of lacks or misfortunes in other forms  
(eg. Tale 34, 35)
- K<sub>neg.</sub> Lacks or misfortunes are not liquidated or the object of search is lost after being found, hence a negative result  
(eg. Tale 1, 14, 18, 19, 21, 29)
- Pr<sup>8</sup> The villain pursues a person other than the hero  
(eg. Tale 26)
- Rs<sup>11</sup> A person other than the hero escapes from the pursuit of the villain  
(eg. Tale 26)
- Rs<sub>neg.</sub> The hero fails to flee from the pursuit  
(eg. Tale 24)
- T<sup>5</sup> The hero transforms himself into an animal  
(Tale 6, 10)
- T<sup>6</sup> The hero/heroine is restored to his original appearance  
(Tale 24, 28)
- \*W The hero marries a princess without ascending to the throne  
(eg. Tale 9)
- \*\*W The heroine becomes queen upon marrying the king  
(eg. Tale 17)
- <sup>0</sup>w Other forms of union or marriage  
(eg. Tale 10)

## Appendix V

### Functional schemes of the Fifty Zhiguai Tales

1. I.  $a^6\uparrow G^3K^4$   
II.  $a^6\uparrow K-$
2. I.  $a^6\uparrow F^{10} | \text{-----} | F^9K^{11}$   
II.  $a^6K_9 |$
3. I.  $a^6\uparrow K^\vee \downarrow$
4. I.  $a^6B^1CD^1E^1\uparrow D^1E^1F^9K^5$
5. I.  $F^5F^1 | \text{-----} | a^6D^{11}E^{11}K^3F^1$   
II.  $B^4\gamma^1\uparrow \delta^1U |$
6. I.  $A^{16}B^4C\uparrow T^5H^1I^1U$
7. I.  $A^{11} | \text{-----} | \text{Ex } U |$   
II.  $a^6 | B^1C\uparrow \eta^3\theta-H^6I^6K^9 |$   
III.  $B^4a^5\uparrow K^\vee$
8. I.  $a^1F_9^6 | \text{---} | W^* |$   
II.  $\gamma^1 | \text{-----} | \delta^1K-f^1J^3 |$   
III.  $a^5D^2E^2F^{vi}Qw^0$
9. I.  $F^3A^{19} | \text{-----} | U |$   
II.  $a^2B^1C\uparrow H^1 | I^5 | \downarrow K^5 * W |$
10. I.  $\beta^1a^1 | \text{-----} | C\uparrow \downarrow + K^5 |$   
II.  $B^1+\gamma^3 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | \delta^3 | \text{---} | U |$   
III.  $a^1 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | K^{ix} | \text{---} | \text{-----} | T^{5+0}w |$   
IV.  $\varepsilon^1\zeta^1A^{14} | \text{---} | \text{---} | \text{---} | Pr^2Rs^{10} | \text{-----} | U |$
11. I.  $\beta^2a^5+D^1E^1\uparrow F^6K^6$
12. I.  $\beta^4F^6G^3B^1+D^7C\uparrow F_{vi}E^7G^3f^1$   
II.  $D^7F^{vi}G^3E^7F^9\downarrow$   
III.  $A^{22}+a^1\uparrow B^4U\downarrow K^9$
13. I.  $A^{14}B^4D^3E^3F^5 | \text{-----} | U$   
II.  $\zeta^3A^{13}\uparrow F^6B^4CF^1\uparrow I^5 |$
14. I.  $D^1+a^6E-F | \text{-----} | K^5$   
II.  $D^1E^1F^9 |$

15. I.  $A^{20}a^6K_{ix}$   
 II.  $\uparrow a^6 | \text{-----} | \text{-----} | K^4 |$   
 III.  $D^1E^1 + A^{21} | \text{-----} | \text{-----} | F = |$   
 IV.  $D^1E^1 | \text{---} | \text{---} | f^1 |$
16. I.  $\beta^3 A^{20} B^4 | \text{-----} | \text{---} | A^{12} F^6 \text{Ex} H^6 I^6 U |$   
 II.  $B^2 + \gamma^2 C \uparrow \delta^1 | U |$   
 III.  $A^{14} | \text{-----} | U$
17. I.  $A^{14} A^{17} + B^4 C f^1 \uparrow H^6 I^6 U \downarrow^{**} W$
18. I.  $\beta^2 a^1 D^1 E^1 F^5 F^9 (\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii}) \times 2 \varepsilon^{ji} | \zeta^{ii} | F^1 | \text{-----} | K^6 W^*$   
 II.  $\delta^1 | \text{---} | K - |$
19. I.  $\beta^4 a^6 | \text{-----} | F^6 G^4 F_9^6 K^5 |$   
 II.  $a^5 F^5 K^4 |$   
 III.  $a^6 D^1 E - \downarrow F = K - \circ \uparrow$
20. I.  $\beta^2 \eta^1 \theta^1 A^{22} \text{Ex} U$   
 II.  $LMB^2 C \uparrow F^{vi} \text{Ex} UN$
21. I.  $a^1 D^2 E^2 f^9 | \text{-----} | \text{-----} | \text{---} | \text{---} | W^*$   
 II.  $a^1 B^8 \varepsilon^1 \zeta^4 LM | \text{-----} | K^9 | NEx |$   
 III.  $B^3 \uparrow D^1 E^1 F^9 |$
22. I.  $a^1 | \text{-----} | W^*$   
 II.  $a^6 B^1 C \uparrow A^{20} H^5 I^6 D^4 E^4 F^1 K^9 |$
23. I.  $\beta^1 \eta^3 A^5 \theta^3 (\eta^3 \theta^3) \times 2 \eta^3 \theta - (\eta^1 \theta -) \times 2 U$
24. I.  $a^6 \uparrow | \text{---} | F^9 K^4 |$   
 II.  $\gamma^3 \uparrow | \text{-----} | \delta^3 U |$   
 III.  $a^6 B^1 + D^1 \uparrow E^1 F^1 F^7 T^6 K^5 \downarrow$
25. I.  $\beta^2 A^{14} \uparrow H^8 I^8 U \downarrow$
26. I.  $\beta^4 D^1 E^1 f^1 \downarrow K^6 W^*$   
 II.  $\beta^4 D^1 E^1 - F = Pr^8 Rs^{11} K - \downarrow$
27. I.  $\beta^4 d^7 E^7 F^1 \downarrow$   
 II.  $A^{14} H^5 I^6 U$
28. I.  $\beta^4 \varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 A^{11} A^5 \eta^2 \theta - \text{-----} | U |$   
 II.  $a^2 \uparrow \varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 \eta^2 + D^{12} \theta - E^{12} | \text{---} | \text{---} | KF^8 |$   
 III.  $a^1 | \text{---} | F_9^6 T^6 + K^5$
29. I.  $a^1 D^2 E^2 F^9 D^1 E^1 F^9 G^3 D^1 F^1 \downarrow E^1 F^{vi} G^1 | \text{-----} | K -$   
 II.  $D^1 E^1 \gamma^1 + D^7 D^2 E^2 \delta^1 + E - F = \downarrow |$
30. I.  $\beta^2 a^1 D^1 E^1 F^6 F^9 (\varepsilon^{ji} \zeta^{ii}) \times 2 W^*$   
 II.  $a^1 MF^9 NMF^9 N + F^3 A^{15} F^9 U$

31. I.  $F^1 \gamma^1 a^1 A^{21} + \delta^1 K^4$  |-----| U  
II.  $\varepsilon^2 \zeta^2 \eta^1 \theta^1 \eta^3 \theta^3 A^1 B^8 \uparrow$
32. I.  $a^1$  |-----|  $E^1 + A^{14} W^*$  |-----| U |  
II.  $D^1 + A^9$  |-----| |-----| U |  
III.  $\gamma^2 \delta^4 B^1 C \uparrow L H^7 E x I^7$  |
33. I.  $\beta^2 a^5 D^1 E^1 F^9 K^4$   
II.  $D^1 E^1 F^1 D^7 E^7 F^{vi}$   
III.  $G^3 D^6 E^6$  |-----|  $F^9 G^2 w^0$   
IV.  $a^1 D^7 E^7 W^*$  |
34. I.  $a^6 D^1 E^1 F^9$  |-----| |-----| |-----| |-----|  $K^5$   
II.  $a^5 B^1$  |-----|  $D^7$  |-----|  $E^7$  |  $f^1 K^4$   
III.  $a^6$  |  $B^1$  |  $C \uparrow D^2 E^2 f^9 \downarrow$  |  $K^{11}$  |
35. I.  $a^1 \varepsilon^j \zeta^i B^8 C \uparrow \varepsilon^j \zeta^i \eta^1 \theta^{11}$  |-----|  $W^*$  |  
II.  $A^{14}$  |-----| |-----|  $a^6 B^4 C \uparrow K^5$   
III.  $\beta^2 a^1 B^4 C K^{11}$  |
36. I.  $a^1$  |-----|  $L W^*$   
II.  $\beta^3 a^6 B^4 G^3 D^1 E^1 F^{vi} D^3 E^3 K F^9 \downarrow$
37. I.  $\beta^3 D^2 E^2 a^5 B^4 C \uparrow D^1 E^1 f^9 \downarrow$  |-----|  $K$  |  
II.  $D^1 E^1 F^9 D^7 B^2 C \uparrow E^7 D^1 E^1 F^9$  |  $\downarrow$
38. I.  $a^6 B^2 C \uparrow F^6 D^2 E^2 K F^9$   
II.  $a^6 B^2 D^7 C \uparrow E^7 F^9 G^3 L f^1 H^6 I^6 \downarrow E x U K^4$
39. I.  $a^1 \beta^4 F^5 F^8 \downarrow W^*$   
II.  $a^6 G^4 D^7 E^7 F^1 K^5 + \downarrow$   
III.  $a^1 \beta^3 B^4 F_9^6 G^4 + D^7 E^7 F^6 G^1 + K^5$   
IV.  $a^6$  |-----|  $D^7$  |-----|  $(D^2 E^2) \times 4$  |  $E^7$  |  $f^1 + K^4$   
V.  $\beta^4 a^6$  |  $B^1$  |  $C \uparrow$  |-----|  $K^5$  |
40. I.  $A^{20}$  |  $\uparrow$  |  $a^5 F^{vi} F^7 K^5$  |  
II.  $a^1$  |-----|  $\varepsilon^3 \zeta^4 P r^2 R s^1 \eta^3 \theta^3 K^3$  |  
III.  $\varepsilon^1 \zeta^4 a^3 B^2 \uparrow \downarrow K -$
41. I.  $\beta^3 A^{22}$  |-----|  $A^{22} U$   
II.  $a^5 B^4 \uparrow K^5$  |
42. I.  $\beta^3 a^1 F^7 \downarrow K F_9^6 K$   
II.  $a^6 B^4 C D^1 E - D^1 E - F = K -$
43. I.  $\beta^4 F^8 F^1 (* D^7 E^7) \times 2 D^4 E^4 F_9^6 f^1$



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